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CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS

NINETEENTH CENTURY LETTERS

SELECTED AND EDITED, WITH AN INTRODUCTION
BY
BYRON JOHNSON REES
PROFESSOR OF ENGLISH AT WILLIAMS COLLEGE

CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS
NEW YORK CHICAGO BOSTON

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B

TO

GRAHAM RYLE

PREFACE

The present volume is the result of an attempt to bring together within small compass, from the correspondence of well-known English and American authors of the Nineteenth Century, letters that possess two, and in most instances, three characteristics. Though there are exceptions, the letters here submitted are usually typical of the writers; they furnish information as to literary conditions and relationships; and they possess interest in themselves as examples of epistolary correspondence. Obviously allowance must be made for vagaries of judgment and taste. A letter that interests the editor because of some personal predilection may seem dull to many readers; and doubtless he has often failed through individual limitations, either of responsiveness or of knowledge, to include letters that should have been printed. Often he has somewhat wistfully rejected a good letter because it was already thoroughly familiar to readers. Now and then the law of copyright has hampered his freedom of choice.

Of the various kinds of writing, the letter most of all incites to annotation. The temptation to write foot-notes, those "voices that bark from the basement," is particularly strong when a reference to a somewhat obscure event, or an allusion to a matter familiar to but a small group of persons, makes its appearance. When tempted the editor has usually remembered that readers and students of literary letters are in most cases quite capable of making their own comments on the text, or that, if they are not, there is on this occasion no good excuse for annoying them.

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INTRODUCTION

Of the numerous species of written discourse to which the human instinct for communicating thought and feeling has given rise, that most frequently and generally employed is without question the letter. It is the one type of composition that approximately every one, whatever the degree of his literary attainment, finds it desirable and necessary after some fashion to cultivate. Novels, short stories, essays, poems, plays, biographies, editorial articles,—these are, after all, the contribution of a relatively small number of writers; but 'the literature of the letter' is always being unimaginably augmented through the activity of the people as a whole. Under such circumstances, circumstances that involve wholesale participation and infinite variety in purpose and adaptation, it is perhaps not surprising that attempts clearly to define the principles of excellence in letter-writing should have invariably failed. For the other species of literary activity, indeed, there are more or less familiar and adequate critical standards. Criticism, disseminated in some phase among all classes of readers and writers, has made it possible for almost any person to differentiate the novel, let us say, from the essay, or the play from an argument; everybody, unless it be the more enthusiastic writer of 'new poetry,' recognizes the difference between prose and verse; but criticism has not yet pointed out satisfactorily the characteristics that all good letters possess, and has promulgated no canons that commend themselves inevitably to any considerable body of good judges. We know of course that some letters are 'good' and that others are 'bad,' but what it is that effects the 'goodness,' other than those qualities that are common to memorable and felicitous writing in general, we are often at a loss to say. We are convinced that the letters of Cicero and of the younger Pliny are ex-

cellent, and those of Madame de Sévigné, Horace Walpole, Alexander Pope, and Lady Mary Wortley Montagu; but so are Sir Richard Steele's and Dean Swift's and Marjorie Fleming's. We regard Lord Chesterfield and William Cowper and Edward FitzGerald as notable writers of letters, but we insist that Sydney Smith and Jane Welsh and Benjamin Robert Haydon shall have honorable place. Doubtless it would be possible to find traits common to the letters of all these writers, though it would perhaps be difficult, but the peculiar and individual excellence of the letter-writer, that which gives him distinction, would, in some cases at least, lie outside the critical scheme unless the scheme were so eclectic as to serve no really useful purpose.

Though the task of adequately defining and describing the letter as a literary form may well be left to more fully developed criticism, it is permissible in the meantime to consider suggestions offered by experienced practitioners of 'the gentle art.' James Russell Lowell, in excusing the dulness of one of his letters, says to his correspondent: "Worse than all is that lack of interest in one's self that comes from drudgery,—for I hold that a letter which is not mainly about the writer of it lacks the prime flavor. The wine must smack a little of the cask." Again he writes, "A letter ought always to be the genuine and natural flower of one's disposition." "Do you find," he says, in speaking of Richard Henry Dana, Jr., "do you find the real inside of him in his letters? I think not, and this is a pretty sure test." "It has been a hobby of mine," John Henry Newman wrote to his sister in 1863, "though perhaps it is a truism, not a hobby, that the true life of a man is in his letters. . . . Not only for the interest of a biography, but for arriving at the inside of things, the publication of letters is the true method. Biographies varnish, they assign motives, they conjecture feelings, they interpret Lord Burleigh's nods; but contemporary letters are facts."

Such expressions as "interest in one's self," "the natural flower of one's disposition," "the true life of a man," at once remind us that it is, indeed, very frequently the personality of the writer as revealed in his letters that commends them

to us. Lowell himself was a demonstration of the correctness of his view. He was a poet and his letters contain much that is poetic; he was an indefatigable student and his adventurous reading has left its mark on his correspondence; he was a college professor and a Minister to the Court of St. James; but it is not precisely as poet or scholar or public servant that he makes his impression upon us in the letters that have appeared since his death. What really appeals to us in them is the gradual disclosure of a thoroughly likeable man, a refined and winning yet stalwart New England gentleman, rich in the personal qualities that give grace and value to life.

That the letters of Charles Lamb owe their fascination to their revelation of personality is obvious. Like the *Essays of Elia*, they cast and maintain their spell through the pervasive presence of a fresh and surprising individuality. They are filled with wise and amusing utterances; they are often clever, joyous, hilarious; they are replete with illuminating comment upon his own times and times long past; they are not infrequently superb examples of easy and graceful writing; but their special worth is due to their subjectivity, to the clearness and fulness with which the writer himself appears in them. The reader is assured after a time that he knows Charles Lamb through his letters much as he knows Dr. Johnson through the greatest of biographies. The two men have perhaps little in common, but they are alike in this, that their permanence in the affection of readers is due primarily to the charm of fully-revealed engaging personality. Lamb is "more than an author to those who know him," says Augustus Jessopp. "He is a presence, a presiding genius; he goes in and out with you, haunts you in the kindest, gentlest way." So complete is his mastery over his readers that they espouse his cause as if he were a friend whose name must be shielded from every stain. They deny that he drank to excess, that he smoked too much, even that he stammered more than was meet. They resent Carlyle's unsympathetic paragraph. They are contemptuous of those who speak of "poor Charles Lamb," of "gentle Charles." They remind us, as does Mr. Birrell, that he "earned his own living,

paid his own way, was the helper, not the helped; a man who was beholden to no one, who always came with gifts in his hand, a shrewd man capable of advice, strong in council." It is no slight testimony to the personality of a man, and to the symmetry and completeness of his self-portraiture, that three generations after his death readers should grow warm in discussion of his private character.

Though Swinburne asserted that Edward FitzGerald gave "Omar Khayyám a place forever among the greatest English poets," it is not as translator and poet that he is likely to be longest cherished. Gorgeous and imposing though it is, the *Rubáiyát*, now that the languid pessimism of the last century has given place to a healthier mood, will hardly again make the impression that it made a few years ago. FitzGerald's letters, however, appear to be growing in favor year by year. Indeed, it is a comforting detail of literary history, in itself an indication of the essential soundness of taste, that since the publication of the first selection from his letters in 1889, FitzGerald should have gained the high place he now occupies in the fraternity of letter-writers. This position he is likely to retain, for he has come to it by the way of genuine, spontaneous recognition. So substantial is his fame that probably most readers conversant with nineteenth century correspondence consider him the choicest letter-writer of the period. His excellence, like that of Lowell and Lamb, is closely entwined with the subtle element of personality; but with FitzGerald there intrudes a special and piquant quality such as one does not perceive in the other two. About him there is a brooding melancholy; his very portraits express a 'vague trouble,' as if life had promised great things and then had duped him. Not that he ever says much about his feelings, unless they be pleasant ones: he is too much of a gentleman to inflict his troubles needlessly upon his friends. But always, in his delicate humor, in his keen analyses of men and things, in his dainty and graceful descriptions of garden, field, and sea, in his leisurely and discriminating comments on his favorite authors and painters and composers, one detects a minor chord of penetrating and ineluctable sadness. It is of course the more

moving because not distinctly heard; blent with laughter and gracious talk, it gains poignancy by contrast and lends to the whole personality a sense of mystery that amply justifies Mr. Benson in calling him "the Hamlet of literature."

Unless we are apprised of some particular contingency, we assume that by 'a letter' is meant a communication between two persons. So soon as the writer appears to address a group, or permits the supposition that what he writes will serve the interest of others besides his correspondent, his writing is no longer a letter as we habitually understand the term. In writing to Jane Welsh in 1822 Carlyle indicates his view of the matter. "It seems to me that the chief end of letters is to exhibit to each a picture of the other's soul,—of all the hopes and fears that agitate us, the joys and sorrows and varied anxieties in which a heart's-friend may be expected to sympathise: and if I may trust my own judgement, this employment is even more useful (I say not a word of the delight attending it) than any other to which our imperfect means of communication can be devoted." Such a 'picture,' obviously, it will not be possible to draw if the draughtsman must consider a variety of judgments, a diversity of degrees of sympathy. When a student at Oxford in 1860, John Addington Symonds wrote to his sister: "I wish you would pay more attention to the writing of letters. I am not the proper person to read you a sermon upon this subject, because I do not think that the specimens I send you are at all what letters should be. Yet I labour under the disadvantage of writing to a mixed audience. You have only me to talk to, and, moreover, being a lady, are perhaps more bound to write good letters. I think you should consider more to whom you are writing, in each instance, and try to say something suitable to the tastes, &c., of the individual." "To speak of oneself is, they say, a privilege of friendship," wrote Jane Welsh, but to "speak of oneself" as the best letter-writers have done, and as she often did, is easy only in the simple relationship of single mind to single mind. It is characteristic of a good letter that it should seem to be overheard. When one learns that Pope adroitly effected the publication of his own letters, or that Lady Mary

exhorted her correspondents to keep her letters, alleging that they would be "as good as Madame de Sévigné's forty years hence," or that Stevenson wrote some of his Vailima letters with a view to their being published—an idea which he ultimately abandoned,—one's appreciation, though it remains keen, is radically modified. Judged simply as letters, one may venture to say, Steele's hurried, often illegible notes to the exacting Prue are superior to many of Stevenson's brilliant accounts of life in the South Seas. It is not merely that one's curiosity about Steele and his wife is gratified: rather, one feels that Steele's uncertain excuses are real letters, that they served as genuine communications between two persons, the only persons who were really concerned.

Though it is typical of good letters that they should seem to be overheard, there is a certain limitation as to the degree of intrusion consistent with literary enjoyment. It is for this reason, most probably, that published love letters are usually unsatisfactory. When the reader is continually reminded that he is trespassing upon privacy, that he is reading what the two persons originally interested would have wished unread by strangers, the legitimate pleasure that he normally takes in letters suffers from a sense of indelicacy. The time may come when the letters of John Keats to Fanny Brawne will not make readers uncomfortable, but it will be a time when Keats is far more remote than he is at present, as remote, let us say, as Dorothy Osborne seems to our generation. In reading the Browning letters it is difficult to escape the suspicion that one is a vulgarian. What should be done with the love letters of men and women in whom the public has a certain right of ownership is a complicated question, but there can be no doubt that the early publication of such letters is more or less shameful, or that their very intimacy tends to obscure such intrinsic artistic merit as they may possess. Just as one turns away when the face of a grown man is distorted with grief, one feels embarrassment in contemplating the superexaltation of a celebrated author in the experience of love.

"Letters ought to be nothing but extempore conversation on paper," wrote Horace Walpole to Lady Ossory, and the

expression reminds us that many letters owe their vitality to a characteristic quite distinct from those of personality and intimacy in the sense in which we think of those elements in reading such men as Lamb or Lowell or FitzGerald. What "extempore conversation" meant to Walpole we may learn from his frequent characterizations of his own mental habit. "I am certainly the greatest philosopher in the world," he wrote to Conway in 1774, "without ever having thought of being so; always employed and never busy; eager about trifles and indifferent to everything serious. Well, if it is not philosophy, at least it is content." To be "eager about trifles" and "indifferent to everything serious"—this is a mood, heightened or softened in particular letter-writers, that often goes far to atone for the lack of an engaging personality. It is not necessary to respect Horace Walpole to find his letters diverting. "Fiddles sing all through them," says Thackeray; "wax-lights, fine dresses, fine jokes, fine plate, fine coaches, glitter and sparkle there. Never was such a brilliant Vanity Fair as that through which he leads us." One may have but a moderate liking for Lord Byron as a man and yet relish his astonishing animation and facility. The "invincible confidence" of Wordsworth, the simple, unreflecting trust that Coleridge reposes in his own genius, the majestic sense of a high calling in Carlyle, the detachment of Shelley from ordinary human interests, the burning intensity of Keats, these are personal and subjective notes with which the reader would wish to acquaint himself, but there are times when he does not desire to consider too curiously, when he is in no frame of mind to be improved, when it is a matter of relative indifference to him whether Pantisocracy was a thought purely celestial or merely mad. He is prepared on occasion to read Coleridge's solemn arraignment of Southey, but "not now." He turns to Sydney Smith, who will not long be serious, or to Edward Lear, who cannot; or to Thomas Hood, or Holmes, or Thackeray, or Meredith, who are likely to treat life lightly and pleasantly. A gentleman, according to Newman's classic definition, is "one who never inflicts pain." Of no small number of the best letters in the language it may be said that they illus-

trate the considerateness and the reserve of the well-bred, and the cheerful if somewhat artificial vivacity of society. Their authors ignore the existence of annoyances or treat them as themes for subdued jesting. They indulge us in that delight in disorder of which we are frequently conscious. Nonchalant, or apparently so, as to the sombre and tragic aspects of life, they let the lambent gleams of their wit and humor play upon the surface of things.

It is usually assumed that even the best of the letter-writers of the nineteenth century are inferior to those of the eighteenth, that they fall short of the standard set by Lady Mary, Walpole, Gray, Cowper, and their contemporaries in the 'golden age of letter-writing.' Inasmuch as we are not altogether clear as to the particular desiderata which we should demand in a letter, such a judgment as to the respective products of the two centuries is venturesome. It may be conceded that anyone who contends for the superiority of nineteenth century correspondence may be unduly influenced by the interest that he naturally takes in persons and events close to his own day; it must be admitted, on the other hand, that often no negligible part of the charm of the eighteenth century letter is due to a certain appearance of quaintness in manner resulting merely from the passage of time. Gilbert White's letter to Mrs. Chapone on Timothy the tortoise is no better than Dickens's account of the death of his raven, or than Stevenson's offer to Cosmo Monkhouse to trade bodies. The advantage which White's 'sorrowful reptile' enjoys is due largely to the surprise and pleasure we feel in discovering that the Selborne naturalist's imagination and humor are still thoroughly alive, in spite of a formal style, after the lapse of one hundred and thirty-five years.

Without question the changes that took place during the nineteenth century in the method of disseminating public information wrought in some degree to an enrichment in the content of letters. In the older time, the correspondent was in duty bound to furnish the kind of news which, at a later day, the newspaper conveyed more satisfactorily; he often loaded his pages with matter which no grace of manner

could invest with charm, and he left little room for discussing, what now interests us most, himself and his little, immediate world.

Often, indeed, the eighteenth century letter-writer was quite disinclined to say much either about himself or about his immediate world. Until fairly late in the century he was likely to be a man untouched by romanticism, unaccustomed to introspection, and inattentive to Nature. Whatever the affectations and excesses to which the Romantic Movement led, it made possible, in the happier instances, an absorbing self-portrayal; and, no less important, it opened the eyes of men and women to the beauty of flower and tree, of mountain and torrent, of soughing wind and gleaming star, to all the incredible pageantry of the physical world which Wordsworth and Coleridge and Shelley and Keats knew and interpreted. As the crest of the romantic wave passed, the egotism that had at times been portentous was relieved by a growth in the power of self-criticism, and by an increase in appreciation of the value of perspective. Men seemed less inspired but more normal. They acquired a taste for looking at things from more than one point of view. Still subjective, still observant, they became more tolerant and more urbane. In no type of literature is the effect of these changes more noteworthy than in the letter; in no form of writing is there a clearer or happier reflection of the state of literary taste and feeling that resulted from the rise of romanticism and its subsequent gradual adjustment to every-day human life. Without wishing to be dogmatic, or to underestimate the achievement of a remoter past, one is surely warranted in regarding many of the letters of the latter part of the nineteenth century as eminently felicitous examples of epistolary correspondence. To read the letters of Edward FitzGerald, of James Russell Lowell, of George Meredith, and of Robert Louis Stevenson is to feel the subtle and lasting charm that is induced by blending in one genre deftly-depicted personality, a comfortable sense of intimacy, and the alert urbanity of cultivated society. Whatever the future development of the letter may be—a development that the postal card, the telegraph, the tele-

phone, and the typewriter will probably affect but slightly—it is scarcely conceivable that there should be for generations to come a significant and satisfying letter-literature which will not owe its salient merits to the heritage bequeathed by letter-writers of the nineteenth century.

Byron J. Rees.

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The editor desires to express here his appreciation of the assistance afforded him by Mr. Maxwell E. Perkins, of Charles Scribner's Sons; both his skill and his courtesy have been unfailing. To Mr. Henry W. King, to Mr. Van Henry Cartmell, Jr., and to Mr. Graham Ryle the editor would offer his hearty thanks for valuable suggestions concerning selections from the letters of favourite authors.

NINETEENTH CENTURY LETTERS

[Æt. 42] WILLIAM BLAKE
1757–1827
To John Flaxman
[a roof of rusted gold]

Felpham, 21st September, 1800,
Sunday Morning.

Dear Sculptor of Eternity,—

We are safe arrived at our cottage, which is more beautiful than I thought it, and more convenient. It is a perfect model for cottages, and I think for palaces of magnificence, only enlarging, not altering its proportions and adding ornaments and not principles. Nothing can be more grand than its simplicity and usefulness. Simple without intricacy, it seems to be the spontaneous expression of humanity, congenial to the wants of man. No other formed house can ever please me so well; nor shall I ever be persuaded, I believe, that it can be improved either in beauty or use.

Mr. Hayley received us with his usual brotherly affection. I have begun to work. Felpham is a sweet place for study, because it is more spiritual than London. Heaven opens here on all sides her golden gates; her windows are not obstructed by vapours; voices of celestial inhabitants are more distinctly heard and their forms more distinctly seen; and my cottage is also a shadow of their houses. My wife and sister are both well, courting Neptune for an embrace.

Our journey was very pleasant; and though we had a great deal of luggage, no grumbling. All was cheerfulness and good humour on the road, and yet we could not arrive at our cottage before half-past eleven at night,

owing to the necessary shifting of our luggage from one chaise to another; for we had seven different chaises, and as many different drivers. We set out between six and seven in the morning of Thursday, with sixteen heavy boxes and portfolios full of prints.

And now begins a new life, because another covering of earth is shaken off. I am more famed in heaven for my works than I could well conceive. In my brain are studies and chambers filled with books and pictures of old, which I wrote and painted in ages of eternity before my mortal life; and those works are the delight and study of archangels. Why, then, should I be anxious about the riches and fame of mortality? The Lord our Father will do for us and with us according to His divine will for our good.

You, O dear Flaxman! are a sublime archangel,—my friend and companion from eternity. In the divine bosom in our dwelling-place, I look back into the regions of reminiscence, and behold our ancient days before this earth appeared in its vegetated mortality* to my mortal vegetated eyes. I see our houses of eternity, which can never be separated, though our mortal vehicles should stand at the remotest corners of heaven from each other.

Farewell, my best Friend! Remember me and my wife in love and friendship to our dear Mrs. Flaxman, whom we ardently desire to entertain beneath our thatched roof of rusted gold. And believe me for ever to remain your grateful and affectionate

WILLIAM BLAKE.

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* For Blake's use of the word, cf. *Jerusalem*, p. 77: "Imagination, the real and eternal World of which this Vegetable Universe is but a faint shadow, and in which we shall live in our Eternal or Imaginative Bodies, when these Vegetable Mortal Bodies are no more." (A. G. B. Russell.)

[Æt. 53] SAMUEL ROGERS

1763–1855

To Sarah Rogers

[tea with the wordsworths]

Low-wood Inn:
Friday morning, 28 Aug., 1816.

My dear Sarah,—

I should have written before, but the last post here I missed, and there is one here only every other day. I travelled to Leicester, where I arrived at 11 at night, without an incident, only that in Wells's Row, Islington, we took up an old lady blind and deaf, whose only pleasure seemed to be to shake hands with us all round very often. She spoke, however, of her dinner with great pleasure, and expressed a wish that she might have some fish, an observation to which we could make no reply. Left Leicester next morning at half-past five in an empty coach, and at eleven found myself at Moore's. His cottage is all alone in a pretty little valley with fields and woods about it, and is new and neat. They say, however, it is leaky and smoky. She struck me as much taller and much improved in expression, and, still very handsome, tho' a little of her lustre is gone, and she is thinner. But she surprised me agreeably, and would be admired anywhere. The two little girls are not pretty nor otherwise, and quiet and merry and caressing beyond anything. I wished for you with them very often, and they had made arrangements for you. I stayed till Sunday — having passed into Dovedale with M. and seen Ilam, and then went off alone (for, after all, he left me in the lurch) to Manchester. Napped there, and at one in the morning came on in the mail to Kendal, arriving here on Monday at three. On Tuesday, after a row on the lake, I walked and drank tea with the Wordsworths, who are all as before. They still talk of their day with you on the Thames, and Miss W. counts the years since she saw you. Their present abode is princely—by the side of Rydal Hall. Their windows command Windermere, and their garden (Miss H. and the clerk keep it full of flowers) looks down upon Rydal water. I was asking my way to them at a

cottage door in the road, when the child I spoke to ran in, and a little girl came smiling out and took my hand with a curtsey. It was Miss W., as I guessed, who had called to ask after a child in the measles, and she conducted me to their house. Yesterday I dined there, and to-day he spends the day with me. He is very cheerful and pleasant, and so are they all. I believe they heard of my arrival a few minutes after I came, for they called early the next day while I was on the water. The weather here has been wretched. Now it is mending a little, but still cold and cheerless—the Moores live by a fire, and so do the Ws., and I live in my great-coat. I am now writing in it. What will become of me, I am at a loss to say—but my heart fails me, and I think I shall go on no further. Pray write, my dear Sarah, and tell me your plans, to Low-wood—if you write in four or five days, but afterwards to Keswick. The regatta here is next Wednesday, and W. offers to accompany me to Ulleswater, an offer I am glad to accept, so I think I shall not be at K. before the end of next week. Pray remember me very affectionately to all, and believe me to be,

Ever yours,
S. R.

[Æt. 27] MARIA EDGEWORTH
1767–1849

To Miss Sophy Ruxton

[books and experiments]

Edgeworthstown, July 2, 1794, having the honour to be the fair day of Edgeworthstown, as is well proclaimed to the neighbourhood by the noise of pigs squeaking, men bawling, women brawling, and children squealing, etc.

I will tell you what is going on, that you may see whether you like your daily bill of fare.

There are, an't please you, ma'am, a great many good things here. There is a balloon hanging up, and an-

other going to be put on the stocks; there is soap made, and making from a receipt in Nicholson's "Chemistry"; there is excellent ink made, and to be made by the same book; there is a cake of roses just squeezed in a vise, by my father, according to the advice of Madame De Lagaraye, the woman in the black cloak and ruffles, who weighs with unwearied scales, in the frontispiece of a book, which perhaps my aunt remembers, entitled "Chemie de Goût et de l'Odorat." There are a set of accurate weights, just completed by the ingenious Messrs. Lovell and Henry Edgeworth, partners: for Henry is now a junior partner, and grown an inch and a half upon the strength of it in two months. The use and ingenuity of these weights I do, or did, understand; it is great, but I am afraid of puzzling you and disgracing myself attempting to explain it; especially as, my mother says, I once sent you a receipt for purifying water with charcoal, which she avers to have been above, or below, the comprehension of any rational being.

My father bought a great many books at Mr. Dean's sale. Six volumes of "Machines Approuvés," full of prints of paper mills, gunpowder mills, *machines pour remonter les batteaux, machines pour*—a great many things which you would like to see, I am sure, over my father's shoulder. And my aunt would like to see the new staircase, and to see a kitcat * view of a robin redbreast sitting on her nest in a sawpit, discovered by Lovell; and you would both like to pick Emmeline's fine strawberries round the crowded oval table after dinner, and to see my mother look so much better in the midst of us.

If these delights thy soul can move,
Come live with us and be our love.

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* A name given to the small portraits (thirty-six by twenty-eight inches) painted by Kneller, of the members of the Kit Cat Club.

[Æt. 56]

To Mrs. Ruxton

[AN EVENING AT SIR WALTER SCOTT'S]

Edinburgh, 32 Abercromby Place,
June 8th, 1823.

You have had our history up to Kinneil House. Mr. and Miss Stewart accompanied us some miles on our road to show us the palace of Linlithgow—very interesting to see, but not to describe. The drive from Linlithgow to Edinburgh is nothing extraordinary, but the road approaching the city is grand, and the first view of the castle and "mine own romantic town" delighted my companions; the day was fine and they were sitting outside on the barouche seat—a seat which you, my dear aunt, would not have envied them with all their fine prospects. By this approach to Edinburgh, there are no suburbs; you drive at once through magnificent broad streets and fine squares. All the houses are of stone, darker than the Ardbraccan stone, and of a kind that is little injured by weather or time. Margaret Alison had taken lodgings for us in Abercromby Place—finely built, with hanging shrubbery garden, and the house as delightful as the situation. As soon as we had unpacked and arranged our things the evening of our arrival, we walked, about ten minutes' distance from us, to our dear old friends, the Alisons. We found them shawled and bonneted, just coming to see us. Mr. Alison and Sir Walter Scott had settled that we should dine the first day after our arrival with Mr. Alison, which was just what we wished; but on our return home we found a note from Sir Walter:

"Dear Miss Edgeworth,

I have just received your kind note, just when I had persuaded myself it was most likely I should see you in person or hear of your arrival. Mr. Alison writes to me you are engaged to dine with him to-morrow, which puts Roslin out of the question for that day, as it might keep you late. On Sunday I hope you will join our family-party at five, and on Monday I have asked one or two of the Northern Lights on purpose to meet you. I should be engrossing at any time, but we shall be more disposed

to be so just now, because on the 12th I am under the necessity of going to a different kingdom (only the kingdom of *Fife*) for a day or two. To-morrow, if it is quite agreeable, I will wait on you about twelve, and hope you will permit me to show you some of our improvements.

I am always,
Most respectfully yours,
WALTER SCOTT.

EDINBURGH, Friday.

Postscript.—Our old family coach is *licensed* to carry *six;* so take no care on that score. I inclose Mr. Alison's note; truly sorry I could not accept the invitation it contains.

Postscript.—My wife insists I shall add that the Laird of Staffa promised to look in on us this evening at eight or nine, for the purpose of letting us hear one of his clansmen sing some Highland boat-songs and the like, and that if you will come, as the Irish should to the Scotch, without any ceremony, you will hear what is perhaps more curious than mellifluous. The man returns to the isles to-morrow. There are no strangers with us; no party; none but all our own family and two old friends. Moreover, all our womankind have been calling at Gibbs's hotel, so if you are not really tired and late, you have not even pride, the ladies' last defense, to oppose to this request. But, above all, do not fatigue yourself and the young ladies. No dressing to be thought of."

Ten o'clock struck as I read the note; we were tired—we were not fit to be seen; but I thought it right to accept "Walter Scott's" cordial invitation; sent for a hackney-coach, and just as we were, without dressing, went. As the coach stopped, we saw the hall lighted, and the moment the door opened, heard the joyous sounds of loud singing. Three servants—"The Miss Edgeworths" sounded from hall to landing-place, and as I paused for a moment in the anteroom, I heard the first sound of Walter Scott's voice—"The Miss Edgeworths *come.*"

The room was lighted by only one globe lamp. A circle were singing loud and beating time—all stopped in an instant, and Walter Scott in the most cordial and courteous manner stepped forward to welcome us: "Miss Edgeworth, this is so kind of you!"

My first impression was, that he was neither so large nor so heavy in appearance as I had been led to expect by description, prints, bust, and picture. He is more lame than I expected, but not unwieldy; his countenance, even by the uncertain light in which I first saw it, pleased me much; benevolent, and full of genius without the slightest effort at expression; delightfully natural, as if he did not know he was Walter Scott or the Great Unknown of the North, as if he only thought of making others happy. After naming to us "Lady Scott, Staffa, my daughter Lockhart, Sophia, another daughter Anne, my son, my son-in-law Lockhart," just in the broken circle as they then stood, and showing me that only his family and two friends, Mr. Clark and Mr. Sharpe, were present, he sat down for a minute beside me on a low sofa, and on my saying, "Do not let us interrupt what was going on," he immediately rose and begged Staffa to bid his boatman strike up again. "Will you then join in the circle with us?" He put the end of a silk handkerchief into my hand, and others into my sisters'; they held by these handkerchiefs all in their circle again, and the boatman began to roar out a Gaelic song, to which they all stamped in time and repeated the chorus, which, as far as I could hear, sounded like "At am Vaun! At am Vaun!" frequently repeated with prodigious enthusiasm. In another I could make out no intelligible sound but "Bar! bar! bar!" But the boatman's dark eyes were ready to start out of his head with rapture as he sung and stamped, and shook the handkerchief on each side, and the circle imitated.

Lady Scott is so exactly what I had heard her described, that it seemed as if we had seen her before. She must have been very handsome—French dark large eyes; civil and good natured. Supper at a round table, a family supper, with attention to us, just sufficient and no more. The impression left on my mind this night was, that Walter Scott is one of the best-bred men I ever saw, with all the exquisite politeness which he knows so well how to describe, which is of no particular school or country, but which is of all countries, the politeness which arises from good and quick sense and feeling, which seems to know by instinct the characters of others, to see what will

please, and put all his guests at their ease. As I sat beside him at supper, I could not believe he was a stranger, and forgot he was a great man. Mr. Lockhart is very handsome, quite unlike his picture in Peters's [*sic*] letters.

When we wakened in the morning, the whole scene of the preceding night seemed like a dream; however, at twelve came the real Lady Scott, and we called for Scott at the Parliament House, who came out of the Courts with joyous face as if he had nothing on earth to do or to think of, but to show us Edinburgh. Seeming to enjoy it all as much as we could, he carried us to Parliament House—Advocate's Library, Castle, and Holyrood House. His conversation all the time better than anything we could see, full of apropos anecdote, historic, serious or comic, just as occasion called for it, and all with a *bonhomie* and an ease that made us forget it was any trouble even to his lameness to mount flights of eternal stairs. Chantrey's statues of Lord Melville and President Blair are admirable. There is another by Roubillac, of Duncan Forbes, which is excellent. Scott is enthusiastic about the beauties of Edinburgh, and well he may be, the most magnificent as well as the most romantic of cities.

We dined with the dear good Alisons. Mr. Alison met me at the drawing-room door, took me in his arms, and gave me a hearty hug. I do not think he is much altered, only that his locks are silvered over. At this dinner were, besides his two sons and two daughters, and Mrs. Alison, Mr. and Mrs. Skene. In one of Scott's introductions to "Marmion" you will find this Mr. Skene, Mr. Hope, the Scotch Solicitor-General (it is curious the Solicitor-Generals of Scotland and Ireland should be Hope and Joy!), Dr. Brewster, and Lord Meadowbank, and Mrs. Maconachie, his wife. Mr. Alison wanted me to sit beside everybody, and I wanted to sit by him, and this I accomplished; on the other side was Mr. Hope, whose head and character you will find in Peters's letters: he was very entertaining. Sophy sat beside Dr. Brewster, and had a great deal of conversation with him.

Next day, Sunday, went to hear Mr. Alison; his fine voice but little altered. To me he appears the best preacher I have ever heard. Dined at Scott's; only his

own family, his friend Skene, his wife and daughter, and Sir Henry Stewart; I sat beside Scott; I dare not attempt at this moment even to think of any of the anecdotes he told, the fragments of poetry he repeated, or the observations on national character he made, lest I should be tempted to write some of them for you, and should never end this letter, which must be ended some time or other. His strong affection for his early friends and his country gives a power and a charm to his conversation, which cannot be given by the polish of the London world and by the habit of literary conversation.

"Quentin Durward" was lying on the table. Mrs. Skene took it up and said, "This is really too barefaced." Scott, when pointing to the hospital built by Heriot, said, "That was built by one Heriot, you know, the jeweler, in Charles the Second's time."

There was an arch simplicity in his look, at which we could hardly forbear laughing.

[Æt. 65] JOHN HOOKHAM FRERE

1769–1846

To Edward Frere

[building a wall]

Malta, April 9th, 1835.

My dear Ned,

I have to acknowledge the receipt of yours of the 2nd March, written with a "real pen, real ink, and real paper." What is the nonsense which that puts me in mind of? Do you recollect? It was something of poor Bob Clive's at Putney and his writing master at home, Mr. Skelton by name, whose figure he used to draw on the blank pages of his books... . . It is not the less true that the sight of your real ink was a great refreshment to my eyes. So much for the form and material characters of your letter. For the substance, I am truly glad that your bargain for Turton is approaching to a satisfactory termination, the more so as I trust it will enable you to inspect us here. Do not be afraid of the summer, it is all nonsense. Ask William! he will tell you; and I can tell you that I am never so well here as in the height of summer, and our

constitutions, I take it, are not much unlike. Take example by the old Welsh mules which are sent over to the West Indies, where they are found to grow young again. You will see how I am ruining myself with building (I dare say you will be told so, if you remain in England). I built my first piece of wall simply by the Lesbian rule, as Aristotle describes it; but I have since made a discovery of the true Pelasgic method, and am finishing the other end of it like a perfect Cyclops, such as Neptune employed in building the walls of Troy. I have not time to explain this, so you must come and judge for yourself on the spot, and stop my hand if you think I am likely to do myself any real injury by the expense, for my architect is persuading me to build a small Doric temple, though the cost, even according to his own statement, will not be less than fifteen pounds; and it will cost me, I believe, seven or eight to finish my wall in a way that Sir W. Gell would approve.

I have been running on with nonsense (from which you will only collect that I am well, and that I shall be very glad to see you), while you are looking for some account of dear S—. She is the most cheerful creature under suffering that ever was, and the delight of everybody, including even that old uncle of hers. You know "she is living with an old uncle."

[Æt. 45] WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

1770–1850

To Bernard Barton

[A "perpetual retainer from incapacity"]

Rydal Mount, near Ambleside,
Jan. 12, 1816.

Dear Sir,

Though my sister, during my absence, has returned thanks in my name for the verses which you have done me the honour of addressing to me, and for the obliging letter which accompanies them, I feel it incumbent on me, on my return home, to write a few words to the same purpose, with my own hand.

It is always a satisfaction to me to learn that I have

given pleasure upon *rational* grounds; and I have nothing to object to your poetical panegyric but the occasion which called it forth. An admirer of my works, zealous as you have declared yourself to be, condescends too much when he gives way to an impulse proceeding from the ——, or indeed from any other Review. The writers in these publications, while they prosecute their inglorious employment, cannot be supposed to be in a state of mind very favourable for being affected by the finer influences of a thing so pure as genuine poetry; and as to the instance which has incited you to offer me this tribute of your gratitude, though I have not seen it, I doubt not but that it is a splenetic effusion of the conductor of that Review, who has taken a perpetual retainer from his own incapacity to plead against my claims to public approbation.

I differ from you in thinking that the only poetical lines in your address are "stolen from myself." The best verse, perhaps, is the following:

"Awfully mighty in his impotence,"

which, by way of repayment, I may be tempted to steal from you on some future occasion.

It pleases, though it does not surprise me, to learn that, having been affected early in life by my verses, you have returned again to your old loves after some little infidelities, which you were shamed into by commerce with the scribbling and chattering part of the world. I have heard of many who upon their first acquaintance with my poetry have had much to get over before they could thoroughly relish it; but never of one who, having once learned to enjoy it, had ceased to value it, or survived his admiration. This is as good an external assurance as I can desire, that my inspiration is from a pure source, and that my principles of composition are trustworthy.

With many thanks for your good wishes, and begging leave to offer mine in return,

I remain,
Dear Sir,
Respectfully yours,
Wm. Wordsworth.

Bernard Barton, Esq., Woodbridge, Suffolk.

[Æt. 50]

To Archdeacon Wrangham
[writing letters; old books]

[1820?]

Dear Wrangham,

You are very good in sending one letter after another to inquire after a person so undeserving of attentions of this kind as myself. Dr. Johnson, I think, observes, or rather is made to observe by some of his biographers, that no man delights to *give* what he is accustomed to *sell.* "For example, you, Mr. Thrale, would rather part with anything in this way than your porter." Now, though I have never been much of a salesman in matters of literature (the whole of my returns—I do not say *net profits,* but *returns*—from the writing trade, not amounting to seven score pounds), yet, somehow or other, I manufacture a letter, and part with it as reluctantly as if it were really a thing of price. But, to drop the comparison, I have so much to do with writing, in the way of labour and profession, that it is difficult to me to conceive how anybody can take up a pen but from constraint. My writing-desk is to me a place of punishment; and, as my penmanship sufficiently testifies, I always bend over it with some degree of impatience. All this is said that you may know the real cause of my silence, and not ascribe it in any degree to slight or forgetfulness on my part, or an insensibility to your worth and the value of your friendship. . . . As to my occupations, they look little at the present age; but I live in hope of leaving something behind me that by some minds will be valued.

I see no new books except by the merest accident. Of course your poem, which I should have been pleased to read, has not found its way to me. You inquire about old books: you might almost as well have asked for my teeth as for any of mine. The only *modern* books that I read are those of Travels, or such as relate to matters of fact; and the only modern books that I care for; but as to old ones, I am like yourself—scarcely anything comes amiss to me. The little time I have to spare—the very little, I may say—all goes that way. If, however, in the

line of your profession you want any bulky old Commentaries on the Scriptures (such as not twelve strong men of these degenerate days will venture—I do not say to *read,* but to *lift*), I can, perhaps, as a special favour, accommodate you.

I and mine will be happy to see you and yours here or anywhere; but I am sorry the time you talk of is so distant: a year and a half is a long time looking forward, though looking back ten times as much is as brief as a dream. My writing is wholly illegible—at least I fear so; I had better, therefore, release you.

Believe me, my dear Wrangham,
Your affectionate friend,
W. Wordsworth.

[Æt. 59]

To Charles Lamb
[character and plot]

Jan. 10, 1830.

My dear Lamb,

A whole twelvemonth have I been a letter in your debt, for which fault I have been sufficiently punished by self-reproach.

I liked your Play* marvellously, having no objection to it but one, which strikes me as applicable to a large majority of plays, those of Shakspeare himself not entirely excepted—I mean a little degradation of character for a more dramatic turn of plot. Your present of Hone's book was very acceptable; and so much so, that your part of the book is the cause why I did not write long ago. I wished to enter a little minutely into notice of the dramatic extracts, and, on account of the smallness of the print, deferred doing so till longer days would allow me to read without candle-light, which I have long since given up. But, alas! when the days lengthened, my eyesight departed, and for many months I could not read three minutes at a time. You will be sorry to hear that this infirmity still hangs about me, and almost cuts me off from reading altogether. But how are you, and how is your dear sister? I long much, as we all do, to know.

* *The Wife's Trial.*

For ourselves, this last year, owing to my sister's dangerous illness, the effects of which are not yet got over, has been an anxious one and melancholy. But no more of this. My sister has probably told everything about the family; so that I may conclude with less scruple, by assuring you of my sincere and faithful affection for you and your dear sister.

Wm. Wordsworth.

[Æt. 60]

To Alexander Dyce

["feeble and fastidious times"]

[No date, but Postmark, 1830.]

I am truly obliged, my dear Sir, by your valuable present of Webster's Dramatic Works and the "Specimens." Your publisher was right in insisting upon the whole of Webster, otherwise the book might have been superseded, either by an entire edition separately given to the world, or in some *corpus* of the dramatic writers. The poetic genius of England, with the exception of Chaucer, Spenser, Milton, Dryden, Pope, and a very few more, is to be sought in her drama. How it grieves one that there is so little probability of those valuable authors being read except by the curious! I questioned my friend Charles Lamb whether it would answer for some person of real taste to undertake abridging the plays that are not likely to be read as wholes, and telling such parts of the story in brief abstract as were ill managed in the drama. He thought it would not.* I, however, am inclined to think it would. . . .

You must indeed have been fond of that ponderous quarto, "The Excursion," to lug it about as you did. In the edition of 1827 it was diligently revised, and the sense in several instances got into less room; yet still it is a long poem for these feeble and fastidious times. You would honour me much by accepting a copy of my poetical works; but I think it better to defer offering it to

* Lamb had published his *Specimens of English Dramatic Poets* in 1808.

you till a new edition is called for, which will be ere long, as I understand the present is getting low.

A word or two about Collins. You know what importance I attach to following strictly the last copy of the text of an author; and I do not blame you for printing in the "Ode to Evening" "brawling" spring; but surely the epithet is most unsuitable to the time, the very worst, I think, that could have been chosen.

[Æt. 72]

To Professor Reed *

[death of southey]

Rydal Mount, March 27, 1843.

My dear Mr. Reed,— . . .

You give me pleasure by the interest you take in the various passages in which I speak of the poets, my contemporaries, who are no more: dear Southey, one of the most eminent, is just added to the list. A few days ago I went over to Keswick to attend his remains to their last earthly abode. For upwards of three years his mental faculties have been in a state of deplorable decay; and his powers of recognition, except very rarely and but for a moment, have been, during more than half that period, all but extinct. His bodily health was grievously impaired, and his medical attendant says that he must have died long since but for the very great strength of his natural constitution. As to his literary remains, they must be very considerable, but, except his epistolary correspondence, more or less unfinished. His letters cannot but be very numerous, and, if carefully collected and judiciously selected, will, I doubt not, add greatly to his reputation. He had a fine talent for that species of composition, and took much delight in throwing off his mind in that way. Mr. Taylor, the dramatic author, is his literary executor.

Though I have written at great, and I fear tiresome, length, I will add a few words upon the wish you express that I would pay a tribute to the English poets of past

* Henry Reed. Professor of Rhetoric and English Literature, University of Pennsylvania.

ages, who never had the fame they are entitled to, and have long been almost entirely neglected. Had this been suggested to me earlier in life, or had it come into my thoughts, the thing in all probability would have been done. At present I cannot hope it will; but it may afford you some satisfaction to be told, that in the MS. poem upon my poetic education there is a whole book, of about 600 lines, upon my obligations to writers of imagination, and chiefly the poets, though I have not expressly named those to whom you allude, and for whom, and many others of their age, I have a high respect.

The character of the schoolmaster, about whom you inquire, had, like the "Wanderer," in "The Excursion," a solid foundation in fact and reality, but, like him, it was also, in some degree, a composition: I will not, and need not, call it an invention—it was no such thing; but were I to enter into details, I fear it would impair the effect of the whole upon your mind; nor could I do it to my own satisfaction. I send you, according to your wish, the additions to the "Ecclesiastical Sonnets," and also the last poem from my pen. I threw it off two or three weeks ago, being in a great measure impelled to it by the desire I felt to do justice to the memory of a heroine,* whose conduct presented, some time ago, a striking contrast to the inhumanity with which our countrymen, shipwrecked lately upon the French coast, have been treated.

Ever most faithfully yours,
WM. WORDSWORTH.

[Æt. 72]

TO SIR ROBERT PEEL
[THE LAUREATESHIP]

RYDAL MOUNT, AMBLESIDE, April 4, 1843.

Dear Sir Robert,

Having since my first acquaintance with Horace borne in mind the charge which he tells us frequently thrilled his ear,

> "Solve senescentem mature sanus equum, ne
> Peccet ad extremum,"

* Grace Darling.

I could not but be deterred from incurring responsibilities which I might not prove equal to at so late a period of life; but as my mind has been entirely set at ease by the very kind and most gratifying letter with which you have honoured me, and by a second communication from the Lord Chamberlain to the same effect, and in a like spirit, I have accepted, with unqualified pleasure, a distinction sanctioned by her Majesty, and which expresses, upon authority entitled to the highest respect, a sense of the national importance of poetic literature; and so favourable an opinion of the success with which it has been cultivated by one who, after this additional mark of your esteem, cannot refrain from again assuring you how deeply sensible he is of the many and great obligations he owes to your goodness, and who has the honour to be,

Dear Sir Robert,
Most faithfully,
Your humble servant,
WILLIAM WORDSWORTH.

[Æt. 74]

TO PROFESSOR REED
[A BIRTHDAY FÊTE]

1844.

. . . In your last letter you speak so feelingly of the manner in which my birthday (April 7) has been noticed, both privately in your country, and somewhat publicly in my own neighbourhood, that I cannot forbear adding a word or two upon the subject. It would have delighted you to see the assemblage in front of our house, some dancing upon the gravel platform, old and young, as described in Goldsmith's travels; and others, children, I mean, chasing each other upon the little plot of lawn to which you descend by steps from the platform. We had music of our own preparing; and two sets of casual itinerants, Italians and Germans, came in successively, and enlivened the festivity. There were present upwards of 300 children, and about 150 adults of both sexes and all ages, the children in their best attire, and of that happy and, I may say, beautiful race, which is spread over this highly-favoured portion of England. The tables were

tastefully arranged in the open air—oranges and gingerbread in piles decorated with evergreens and Spring flowers; and all partook of tea, the young in the open air, and the old within doors. I must own I wish that little commemorations of this kind were more common among us. It is melancholy to think how little that portion of the community which is quite at ease in their circumstances have to do in a *social* way with the humbler classes. They purchase commodities of them, or they employ them as labourers, or they visit them in charity for the sake of supplying their most urgent wants by almsgiving. But this, alas, is far from enough; one would wish to see the rich mingle with the poor as much as may be upon a footing of fraternal equality. The old feudal dependencies and relations are almost gone from England, and nothing has yet come adequately to supply their place. There are tendencies of the right kind here and there, but they are rather accidental than aught that is established in general manners. Why should not great land-owners look for a substitute for what is lost of feudal paternity in the higher principles of christianised humanity and humble-minded brotherhood? And why should this not extend to those vast communities which crowd so many parts of England under one head, in the different sorts of manufacture, which, for the want of it, are too often the pests of the social state? We are, however, improving, and I trust that the example set by some mill-owners will not fail to influence others.

It gave me pleasure to be told that Mr. Keble's Dedication of his "Prælectiones" had fallen in your way, and that you had been struck by it. It is not for me to say how far I am entitled to the honour which he has done me, but I can sincerely say that it has been the main scope of my writings to do what he says I have accomplished. And where could I find a more trustworthy judge?

What you advise in respect to a separate publication of my Church Poetry, I have often turned in my own mind; but I have really done so little in that way compared with the magnitude of the subject, that I have not courage to venture on such a publication. Besides, it would not, I fear, pay its expenses. The Sonnets were

so published upon the recommendation of a deceased nephew of mine, one of the first scholars of Europe, and as good as he was learned. The volume did not, I believe, clear itself, and a great part of the impression, though latterly offered at a reduced price, still remains, I believe, in Mr. Moxon's hands. In this country people who do not grudge laying out their money for new publications on personal or fugitive interests, that every one is talking about, are very unwilling to part with it for literature which is unindebted to temporary excitement. If they buy such at all, it must be in some form for the most part that has little to recommend it but low price.

And now, my dear Sir, with many thanks for the trouble you have been at, and affectionate wishes for your welfare,

Believe me faithfully yours,
Wm. Wordsworth.

[Æt. 75]

To Professor Reed

[PRESENTATION TO THE QUEEN]

Rydal Mount, Ambleside, July 1, 1845.

My dear Mr. Reed,

I have, as usual, been long in your debt, which I am pretty sure you will excuse as heretofore. It gave me much pleasure to have a glimpse of your brother under circumstances which no doubt he will have described to you. He spoke of his health as improved, and I hope it will continue to do so. I understood from him that it was probable that he should call at Rydal before his return to his own country. I need not say to you I shall be glad, truly glad, to see him both for his own sake, and as so nearly connected with you. My absence from home lately was not of more than three weeks. I took the journey to London solely to pay my respects to the Queen upon my appointment to the Laureateship upon the decease of my friend Mr. Southey. The weather was very cold, and I caught an inflammation in one of my eyes, which rendered my stay in the south very uncomfortable. I nevertheless did, in respect to the object of my journey, all that was required. The reception given me by the

Queen at her ball was most gracious. Mrs. Everett, the wife of your minister, among many others, was a witness to it, without knowing who I was. It moved her to the shedding of tears. This effect was in part produced, I suppose, by American habits of feeling, as pertaining to a republican government. To see a grey-haired man of seventy-five years of age, kneeling down in a large assembly to kiss the hand of a young woman, is a sight for which institutions essentially democratic do not prepare a spectator of either sex, and must naturally place the opinions upon which a republic is founded, and the sentiments which support it, in strong contrast with a government based and upheld as ours is. I am not, therefore, surprised that Mrs. Everett was moved, as she herself described to persons of my acquaintance, among others to Mr. Rogers the poet. By the by, of this gentleman, now I believe in his eighty-third year, I saw more than of any other person except my host, while I was in London. He is singularly fresh and strong for his years, and his mental faculties (with the exception of his memory a little) not at all impaired. It is remarkable that he and the Rev. W. Bowles were both distinguished as poets when I was a school-boy, and they have survived almost all their eminent contemporaries, several of whom came into notice long after them. Since they became known, Burns, Cowper, Mason, the author of "Caractacus" and friend of Gray, have died. Thomas Warton, Laureate, then Byron, Shelley, Keats, and a good deal later Scott, Coleridge, Crabbe, Southey, Lamb, the Ettrick Shepherd, Cary the translator of Dante, Crowe the author of "Lewesdon Hill," and others of more or less distinction, have disappeared. And now of English poets, advanced in life, I cannot recall any but James Montgomery, Thomas Moore, and myself, who are living, except the octogenarian with whom I began.

I saw Tennyson, when I was in London, several times. He is decidedly the first of our living poets, and I hope will live to give the world still better things. You will be pleased to hear that he expressed in the strongest terms his gratitude to my writings. To this I was far from indifferent, though persuaded that he is not much in sympathy with what I should myself most value in my

attempts, viz., the spirituality with which I have endeavoured to invest the material universe, and the moral relations under which I have wished to exhibit its most ordinary appearances. I ought not to conclude this first portion of my letter without telling you that I have now under my roof a cousin, who some time ago was introduced, improperly, I think, she being then a child, to the notice of the public, as one of the English poetesses, in an article of the *Quarterly* so entitled. Her name is Emmeline Fisher, and her mother is my first cousin. What advances she may have made in latter years I do not know, but her productions from the age of eight to twelve were not less than astonishing. She only arrived yesterday, and we promise ourselves much pleasure in seeing more of her. Our dear friend Miss Fenwick is also under our roof; so is Katherine Southey, her late father's youngest daughter, so that we reckon ourselves rich; though our only daughter is far from us, being gone to Oporto with her husband on account of her enfeebled frame: and most unfortunately, soon after her arrival, she was seized with a violent attack of rheumatic fever caused by exposure to the evening air. We have also been obliged lately to part with four grandsons, very fine boys, who are gone with their father to Italy to visit their mother, kept there by severe illness, which sent her abroad two years ago. Under these circumstances we old people keep our spirits as well as we can, trusting the end to God's goodness.

Now, for the enclosed poem, which I wrote the other day, and which I send to you, hoping it may give you some pleasure, as a scanty repayment for all that we owe you. Our dear friend, Miss Fenwick, is especially desirous that her warmest thanks should be returned to you for all the trouble you have taken about her bonds. But, to return to the verses: if you approve, pray forward them with my compliments and thanks for his letter to ——. In his letter he states that with others he is strenuously exerting himself in endeavours to abolish slavery, and, as one of the means of disposing the public mind to that measure, he is about to publish selections from various authors in behalf of *humanity*. He begs an original composition from me. I have nothing bearing di-

rectly upon slavery, but if you think this little piece would serve his cause indirectly, pray be so kind as to forward it to him. He speaks of himself as deeply indebted to my writings.

I have not left room to subscribe myself more than

Affectionately yours,

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH.

[Æt. 48]

SYDNEY SMITH

1771–1845

To his Son

[HISTORY AND POETRY]

FOSTON RECTORY, 1819.

My dear Douglas,

Concerning this Mr. ——, I would not have you put any trust in him, for he is not trustworthy; but so live with him as if one day or other he were to be your enemy. With such a character as his, this is a necessary precaution.

In the time you can give to English reading you should consider what it is most needful to have, what it is most shameful to want,—shirts and stockings before frills and collars. Such is the history of your own country, to be studied in Hume, then in Rapin's History of England, with Tindal's Continuation. Hume takes you to the end of James the Second, Rapin and Tindal will carry you to the end of Anne. Then, Coxe's "Life of Sir Robert Walpole," and the "Duke of Marlborough"; and these read with attention to dates and geography. Then, the history of the other three or four enlightened nations in Europe. For the English poets, I will let you off at present with Milton, Dryden, Pope, and Shakspeare; and remember, always in books keep the best company. Don't read a line of Ovid, till you have mastered Virgil; nor a line of Thomson, till you have exhausted Pope; nor of Massinger, till you are familiar with Shakspeare.

I am glad you liked your box and its contents. Think of us as we think of you; and send us the most acceptable of all presents,—the information that you are improving in all particulars.

The greatest of all human mysteries are the Westminster holidays. If you can get a peep behind the curtain, pray let us know immediately the day of your coming home.

We have had about three or four ounces of rain here; that is all. I heard of your being wet through in London, and envied you very much. The whole of this parish is pulverised from long and excessive drought. Our whole property depends upon the tranquillity of the winds: if it blow before it rains, we shall all be up in the air in the shape of dust, and we shall be *transparished* we know not where. God bless you, my dear boy! I hope we shall soon meet at Lydiard.

Your affectionate father,
SYDNEY SMITH.

[Æt. 59]

To Lady Holland
[EXCESSIVE ANXIETY]

May, 1831.

. . . I met John Russell at Exeter. The people along the road were very much disappointed by his smallness. I told them he was much larger before the Bill was thrown out, but was reduced by excessive anxiety about the people. This brought tears into their eyes!

S. S.

[Æt. 64]

To Miss ——
[ON TEARING FROCKS]

London, July 22nd, 1835.

Lucy, Lucy, my dear child, don't tear your frock: tearing frocks is not of itself a proof of genius; but write as your mother writes, act as your mother acts; be frank, loyal, affectionate, simple, honest; and then integrity or laceration of frock is of little import.

And Lucy, dear child, mind your arithmetic. You know, in the first sum of yours I ever saw, there was a mistake. You had carried two (as a cab is licensed to do)

and you ought, dear Lucy, to have carried but one. Is this a trifle? What would life be without arithmetic, but a scene of horrors?

You are going to Boulogne, the city of debts, peopled by men who never understood arithmetic; by the time you return, I shall probably have received my first paralytic stroke, and shall have lost all recollection of you; therefore I now give you my parting advice. Don't marry anybody who has not a tolerable understanding and a thousand a year; and God bless you, dear child!

SYDNEY SMITH.

[Æt. 64]

TO MRS. HOLLAND

[A CHANNEL-CROSSING]

ROUEN, Oct. 6, 1835.

My dearest Child,—

—— fell ill in London, and detained us a day or two. At Canterbury, the wheel would not turn round; we slept there, and lost our passage the next day at Dover: this was Wednesday,—a day of mist, fog, and despair. It blew a hurricane all that night, and we were kept awake by thinking of the different fish by which we should be devoured on the following day. I thought I should fall to the lot of some female porpoise, who, mistaking me for a porpoise, but finding me only a parson, would make a dinner of me. We were all up and at the quay by five in the morning. The captain hesitated very much whether he would embark, and your mother solicited me in pencil notes not to do so; however, we embarked,—the French Ambassador, ourselves, twenty Calais shopkeepers, and a variety of all nations. The passage was tremendous: Hibbert had crossed four times, and the courier twenty; I had crossed three times more, and we none of us ever remember such a passage. I lay along the deck, wrapped in a cloak, shut my eyes, and, as to danger, reflected that it was much more apparent than real; and that, as I had so little life to lose, it was of little consequence whether I was drowned, or died, like a resident clergymen, from indigestion. Your mother was taken out more dead than alive.

We were delighted with the hotel of Dessein, at Calais; eggs, butter, bread, coffee—everything better than in England—the hotel itself magnificent. We all recovered, and stayed there the day; and proceeded to sleep at Montreuil, forty miles, where we were still more improved by a good dinner. The next day, twenty miles farther, to Abbeville; from thence, sixty miles the next day to this place, where we found a superb hotel, and are quite delighted with Rouen; the churches far exceed anything in England in richness of architectural ornament. The old buildings of Rouen are most interesting. All that I refuse to see is, where particular things were done to particular persons; —the square where Joan of Arc was burnt,—the house where Corneille was born. The events I admit to be important; but, from long experience, I have found that the square where Joan of Arc was burnt, and the room where Corneille was born, have such a wonderful resemblance to other rooms and squares, that I have ceased to interest myself about them.

To-morrow we start for Mantes, and the next day we shall be at Paris. Travelling is extremely slow—five miles an hour. I find the people now as I did before, most delightful; compared to them we are perfect barbarians. Happy the man whose daughter were half as well-bred as the chambermaid at Dessein's, or whose sons were as polished as the waiter! Whatever else you do, insist, when Holland brings you to France, on coming to Rouen; there is nothing in France more worth seeing. Come to Havre, and by steam to Rouen. God bless you, dear child! Give my love to Froggy and Doggy. Your affectionate father,

SYDNEY SMITH.

[Æt. 64]

To Mrs. Holland
[the mayor of bristol]

December 11, 1835.

My dearest Child,—

Few are the adventures of a canon travelling gently over good roads to his benefice. In my way to Reading I had, for my companion, the Mayor of Bristol when I

preached that sermon in favour of the Catholics. He recognized me, and we did very well together. I was terribly afraid that he would stop at the same inn, and that I should have the delight of his society for the evening; but he (thank God!) stopped at the Crown, as a loyal man, and I, as a rude one, went on to the Bear. Civil waiters, wax candles, and off again the next morning, with my friend and Sir W. W——, a very shrewd, clever, coarse, entertaining man, with whom I skirmished *à l'aimable* all the way to Bath. At Bath, candles still more waxen, and waiters still more profound. Being, since my travels, very much Gallicised in my character, I ordered a pint of claret; I found it incomparably the best wine I ever tasted; it disappeared with a rapidity which surprises me even at this distance of time. The next morning, in the coach by eight, with a handsome valetudinarian lady, upon whom the coach produced the same effect as a steam-packet would do. I proposed weak warm brandy and water; she thought, at first, it would produce inflammation of the stomach, but presently requested to have it warm and *not* weak, and she took it to the last drop, as I did the claret. All well here. God bless you, dearest child! Love to Holland.

SYDNEY SMITH.

[Æt. 65]

To COLONEL FOX

[A PROBLEM IN LATCHES]

October, 1836.

My dear Charles,—

If you have ever paid any attention to the habits of animals, you will know that donkeys are remarkably cunning in opening gates. The way to stop them is to have two latches instead of one: a human being has two hands, and lifts up both latches at once: a donkey has only one nose, and latch A drops as he quits it to lift up latch B. Bobus and I had the grand luck to see little Aunty engaged intensely with this problem. She was taking a walk, and was arrested by a gate with this formidable difficulty: the donkeys were looking on to await the issue. Aunty lifted up the first latch with the most

perfect success, but found herself opposed by a second; flushed with victory, she quitted the first latch and rushed at the second: her success was equal, till in the meantime the first dropped. She tried this two or three times, and, to her utter astonishment, with the same results; the donkeys brayed, and Aunty was walking away in great dejection, till Bobus and I recalled her with loud laughter, showed her that she had two hands, and roused her to vindicate her superiority over the donkeys. I mention this to you to request that you will make no allusion to this animal, as she is remarkably touchy on the subject, and also that you will not mention it to Lady Mary. I wish you would both come here next year. Always yours, my dear Charles, very sincerely,

SYDNEY SMITH.

[Æt. 68]

TO CHARLES DICKENS

[AN INVITATION TO DINE]

CHARLES STREET, BERKELEY SQUARE,
June 11, 1839.

My dear Sir,

Nobody more, and more justly, talked of than yourself. The Miss Berrys, now at Richmond, live only to become acquainted with you, and have commissioned me to request you to dine with them Friday, the 29th, or Monday, July 1st, to meet a canon of St. Paul's, the rector of Combe Florey, and the vicar of Halberton,*—all equally well known to you; to say nothing of other and better people. The Miss Berrys and Lady Charlotte Lindsay have not the smallest objection to be put into a number,† but, on the contrary, would be proud of the distinction; and Lady Charlotte, in particular, you may marry to Newman Noggs. Pray come; it is as much as my place is worth to send them a refusal.

SYDNEY SMITH.

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* Sydney Smith was all three.
† Of *Nicholas Nickleby*, then publishing.

[Æt. 71]

To John Murray

[moribundity and caducity]

Combe Florey, Sept. 12, 1842.

My dear Murray,

How did the Queen receive you? What was the general effect of her visit? Was it well managed? Does she show any turn for metaphysics? Have you had much company in the Highlands?

Mrs. Sydney and I are both in fair health,—such health as is conceded to moribundity and caducity.

Horner applied to me, and I sent him a long letter upon the subject of his brother, which he likes, and means to publish in his Memoirs. He seeks the same contribution from Jeffrey. Pray say to Jeffrey that he ought to send it. It is a great pity that the subject has been so long deferred. The mischief has all proceeded from the delays of poor Whishaw, who cared too much about reputation, to do anything in a period compatible with the shortness of human life. If you have seen Jeffrey, tell me how he is, and if you think he will stand his work.

We have the railroad now within five miles. Bath in two hours, London in six,—in short, everywhere in no time! Every fresh accident on the railroads is an advantage, and leads to an improvement. What we want is, an overturn which would kill a bishop, or, at least, a dean. This mode of conveyance would then become perfect. We have had but little company here this summer. Luttrell comes next week. I have given notice to the fishmongers, and poulterers, and fruit women! Ever, dear Murray, your sincere friend,

Sydney Smith.

[Æt. 71]

To Lady Holland

[JOHN ALLEN'S LEGS]

Combe Florey, Sept. 13, 1842.

My dear Lady Holland,

I am sorry to hear Allen* is not well; but the reduction of his legs is a pure and unmixed good; they are enormous,—they are clerical! He has the creed of a philosopher and the legs of a clergyman; I never saw such legs,—at least, belonging to a layman.

Read "A Life in the Forest," † skipping nimbly; but there is much of good in it.

It is a bore, I admit, to be past seventy, for you are left for execution, and are daily expecting the death-warrant; but, as you say, it is not anything very capital we quit. We are, at the close of life, only hurried away from stomach-aches, pains in the joints, from sleepless nights and unamusing days, from weakness, ugliness, and nervous tremors; but we shall all meet again in another planet, cured of all our defects, —— will be less irritable; —— more silent; —— will assent; —— Jeffrey will speak lower; Bobus will be just as he is; I shall be more respectful to the upper clergy; but I shall have as lively a sense as I now have of all your kindness and affection for me.

Sydney Smith.

[Æt. 71]

To Mrs. ——

[A BEAUTIFUL MONUMENT]

Combe Florey, Oct. 13, 1842.

My dear Mrs. ——,

You lie heavy upon my conscience, unaccustomed to bear any weight at all. What can a country parson say to a travelled and travelling lady, who neither knows nor cares anything for wheat, oats, and barley? It is this

* Physician and librarian at Holland House.
† By S. M. Cooper. Philadelphia, 1854.

reflection which keeps me silent. Still she has a fine heart, and likes to be cared for, even by me.

Mrs. Sydney and I are in tolerable health,—both better than we were when you lived in England; but there is much more of us, so that you will find you were only half acquainted with us! I wish I could add that the intellectual faculties had expanded in proportion to the augmentation of flesh and blood.

Have you any chance of coming home? or rather, I should say, have we any chance of seeing you at home? I have been living for three months quite alone here. I am nearly seventy-two, and I confess myself afraid of the very disagreeable methods by which we leave this world; the long death of palsy, or the degraded spectacle of aged idiotism. As for the *pleasures* of the world,—it is a very ordinary, middling sort of place. Pray be my tombstone, and say a good word for me when I am dead! I shall think of my beautiful monument when I am going; but I wish I could see it before I die. God bless you!

SYDNEY SMITH.

[Æt. 71]

TO LADY HOLLAND

[A MARTINET]

November 6th, 1842.

My dear Lady Holland,

I have not the heart, when an amiable lady says, "Come to 'Semiramis' in my box," to decline; but I got bolder at a distance. "Semiramis" would be to me pure misery. I love music very little,—I hate acting; I have the worst opinion of Semiramis herself, and the whole thing (I cannot help it) seems so childish and so foolish that I cannot abide it. Moreover, it would be rather out of etiquette for a canon of St. Paul's to go to an opera; and where etiquette prevents me from doing things disagreeable to myself, I am a perfect martinet.

All these things considered, I am sure you will not be a Semiramis to me, but let me off.

SYDNEY SMITH.

[Æt. 71]

To Miss Berry

[TITTENHANGER]

November, 1842.

Where is Tittenhanger?
Is it near Bangor?
Is it in Scotland,
Or a more flat land?
Is it in Wales,
Or near Versailles?
Tell me, in the name of grace,
Why you go to such a place?
I do not know in what map to look,
And I can't find it in the Road-book.
I always feel so sad and undone,
When you and Agnes go from London.
Your loving friend and plump divine
Accepts your kind commands to dine.
I will be certain to remember
The fifteenth day of this November.
There is a young prince
Two days since—
But for fear I should be a bore,
I won't write you any more;
Indeed, I've nothing else to tell,
But that Monckton Milnes is well.

Sydney Smith.

[Æt. 72]

To Mrs. Grote

[THE HAPPY SURGEONS]

Combe Florey, July 17, 1843.

I have been sadly tormented with the gout in my knee. I had made great progress; but at the Archbishop's I walked too much, and the gout came back.

My place looks very beautiful, and I really enjoy the change. We were very sorry not to see you the evening you were to come to us; but the temptation not to come, where you have engaged to come, is more than you can

resist: try refusing, and see what that will do! Mr. Grote was very agreeable and sensible, as he always is. I met Brunel at the Archbishop's, and found him a very lively and intelligent man. He said that when he coughed up the piece of gold, the two surgeons, the apothecary, and physicians all joined hands, and danced around the room for ten minutes, without taking the least notice of his convulsed and half-strangled state. I admire this very much. Your sincere friend,

SYDNEY SMITH.

[Æt. 72]

TO LORD MURRAY

[A MASS OF NOURISHMENT]

COMBE FLOREY, Sept. 29, 1843.

My dear Murray,

Jeffrey has written to me to say he means to dedicate his Essays to me. This I think a very great honour, and it pleases me very much. I am sure he ought to resign. He has very feeble health; a mild climate would suit the state of his throat. Mrs. Jeffrey thinks he could not employ himself. Wives know a great deal about husbands; but, if she is right, I should be surprised. I have thought he had a canine appetite for books, though this sometimes declines in the decline of life. I am beautifying my house in Green Street; a comfortable house is a great source of happiness. It ranks immediately after health and a good conscience. I see your religious war is begun in Scotland. I suppose Jeffrey will be at the head of the Free Church troops. Do you think he has any military talents?

You are, I hear, attending more to diet than heretofore. If you wish for anything like happiness in the fifth act of life, eat and drink about one-half what you *could* eat and drink. Did I ever tell you my calculation about eating and drinking? Having ascertained the weight of what I could live upon, so as to preserve health and strength, and what I did live upon, I found that, between ten and seventy years of age, I had eaten and drunk forty four-horse waggon-loads of meat and drink more than would have preserved me in life and health! The

value of this mass of nourishment I considered to be worth seven thousand pounds sterling. It occurred to me that I must, by my voracity, have starved to death fully a hundred persons. This is a frightful calculation, but irresistibly true; and I think, dear Murray, your waggons would require an additional horse each!

Lord and Lady Lansdowne, who are rambling about this fine country, are to spend a day here next week. You must really come to see the West of England. From Combe Florey we will go together to Linton and Lynmouth, than which there is nothing finer in this island. Two of our acquaintance dead this week, — Stewart Mackenzie and Bell! We must close our ranks. God bless you, my dear Murray!

SYDNEY SMITH.

[Æt. 72]

TO MRS. MEYNELL

[ARCADIAN OLD GENTLEMEN]

COMBE FLOREY, 1843.

My dear Mrs. Meynell,

Let me, if you please, have a word or two from you, to tell me of your new habitation. Saba seems to have been delighted with her visit. I see —— has been with you. How did you like her? To me she is agreeable, civil, and elegant, and by no means insipid. She has a kind of ready-money smile, and a three-per-cent. affability, which make her interesting.

We have been leading a very solitary life here. Hardly a soul has been here, but I am contented, as I value more every day the pleasures of indolence; and there is this difference between a large inn like Temple Newsam and a small public-house like Combe Florey, that you hold a numerous society, who make themselves to a certain degree independent of you, and do not weigh upon you; whereas, as I hold only two or three, the social weight is upon me. Luttrell is staying here. Nothing can exceed the innocence of our conversation. It is one continued eulogy upon man-and-woman-kind. You would suppose that two Arcadian old gentlemen, after shearing their flocks, had agreed to spend a week together upon curds

and cream, and to indulge in gentleness of speach and softness of mind.

We have had a superb summer, but I am glad it is over; I am never happy till the fires are lighted. Where is your house in London? You cannot but buy one: it is absolutely impossible for Temple Newsam not to have a London establishment. God bless you, dear G.! Keep a little love for your old friend,

SYDNEY SMITH.

To His Grandchild [Undated]

[ON SENDING HIM A LETTER OVERWEIGHT]

Oh, you little wretch! Your letter cost me fourpence. I will pull all the plums out of your puddings; I will undress your dolls and steal their under-petticoats; you shall have no currant-jelly to your rice; I will kiss you till you cannot see out of your eyes; when nobody else whips you, I will do so; I will fill you so full of sugar-plums that they shall run out of your nose and ears; lastly, your frocks shall be so short that they shall not come below your knees. Your loving grandfather,

SYDNEY SMITH.

[Æt. 41] SIR WALTER SCOTT

1771–1832

To Henry Brevoort

[THE KNICKERBOCKER HISTORY]

ABBOTSFORD, 23d April, 1813.

My dear Sir,

I beg you to accept my best thanks for the uncommon degree of entertainment which I have received from the most excellently jocose history of New York. I am sensible, that as a stranger to American parties and politics, I must lose much of the concealed satire of the piece, but I must own that looking at the simple and obvious meaning only, I have never read anything so closely resembling the style of Dean Swift, as the annals of Diedrich Knickerbocker. I have been employed these few evenings in reading them aloud to Mrs. S. and two ladies who are our

guests, and our sides have been absolutely sore with laughing. I think, too, there are passages which indicate that the author possesses powers of a different kind, and has some touches which remind me much of Sterne. I beg you will have the kindness to let me know when Mr. Irvine * takes pen in hand again, for assuredly I shall expect a very great treat which I may chance never to hear of but through your kindness.

Believe me, Dear Sir,
Your obliged humble servant,
WALTER SCOTT.

[Æt. 49]

To MRS. HUGHES

[THE WAVERLEY NOVELS]

WATERLOO HOTEL, Tuesday,
March 7, 1821.

My dear Mrs. Hughes,—

I have been so completely harassed by business and engagements since I came to this wilderness of houses, that I must have seemed very ungrateful in leaving your kind remembrances unacknowledged. You mistake when you give me any credit for being concerned with these far-famed novels, but I am not the less amused with the hasty dexterity of the good folks of Cumnor and its vicinity getting all their traditionary lore into such order as to meet the taste of the public. I could have wished the author had chosen a more heroical death for his fair victim.†

It is some time since I received and acknowledged your young student's very spirited verses. I am truly glad that Oxford breeds such nightingales, and that you have an interest in them. I sent my letter to my friend Longman, and, as it did not reach you, can only repeat my kindest and best thanks. I would be most happy to know your son, and hope you will contrive to afford me that pleasure.

With best compliments to Dr. Hughes, and sincere re-

* Irving.

† Amy Robsart, in *Kenilworth.*

gret that I have so often found Amen Corner untenanted, I am, with sincerity,

Dear Mrs. Hughes,
Your much obliged humble servant,
WALTER SCOTT.

[Æt. 51]

To THOMAS FROGNALL DIBDIN
[THE UNKNOWN AUTHOR]

EDIN., Feb. 25, 1823.

My dear Sir,

I was duly favoured with your letter, which proves one point against the unknown Author of *Waverley;* namely that he is certainly a Scotsman, since no other nation pretends to the advantage of second sight. Be he who or where he may, he must certainly feel the very high honour which has selected him, *nominis umbra,* to a situation so worthy of envy.

As his personal appearance in the fraternity is not like to be a speedy event, one may presume he may be desirous of offering some token of his gratitude in the shape of a reprint, or such-like kickshaw, and for this purpose you had better send me the statutes of your learned body, which I will engage to send him in safety.

It will follow as a characteristic circumstance, that the table of the Roxburghe, like that of King Arthur, will have a vacant chair, like that of Banquo at Macbeth's banquet. But if this author, who "hath fernseed and walketh invisible," should not appear to claim it before I come to London (should I ever be there again), with permission of the Club, I, who have something of adventure in me, although a knight like Sir Andrew Ague-cheek, "dubb'd with unhacked rapier, and on carpet consideration," would, rather than lose the chance of a dinner with the Roxburghe Club, take upon me the adventure of the *siege perilous,* and reap some amends for perils and scandals into which the invisible champion has drawn me, by being his *locum tenens* on so distinguished an occasion.

It will not be uninteresting to you to know, that a fraternity is about to be established here something on the

plan of the Roxburghe Club; but, having Scottish antiquities chiefly in view, it is to be called the Bannatyne Club, from the celebrated antiquary, George Bannatyne, who compiled by far the greatest record of old Scottish poetry. The first meeting is to be held on Thursday, when the health of the Roxburghe Club will be drunk.—I am always, my dear sir, your most faithful humble servant,

WALTER SCOTT.

[Æt. 54]

TO DR. AND MRS. HUGHES

[THE FINANCIAL DISASTER]

EDINBURGH, 6 February, 1826.

My dear Mrs. Hughes and my worthy Doctor,—

I write immediately to give you the information which your kindness thinks of importance. I shall certainly lose a very large sum by the failure of my booksellers, whom all men considered as worth £150,000 & who I fear will not cut up, as they say, for one fourth of the money. But looking at the thing at the worst point of view, I cannot see that I am entitled to claim the commiseration of any one, since I have made an arrangement for settling these affairs to the satisfaction of every party concerned so far as yet appears, which leaves an income with me ample for all the comforts and many of the elegancies of life, and does not in the slightest degree innovate on any of my comforts. So what title have I to complain? I am far richer in point of income than Generals and Admirals who have led fleets and armies to battle. My family are all provided for in present or in prospect, my estate remains in my family, my house and books in my own possession. I shall give up my house in Edinb. and retire to Abbotsford; where my wife and Anne will make their chief residence; during the time our courts sit, when I must attend, I will live at my club. If Anne wishes to see a little of the world in the gay season, they can have lodgings for two or three weeks; this plan we had indeed form'd before it became imperative.

At Abbotsford we will cut off all hospitality, which latterly consumed all my time, which was worse than the expense; this I intended to do at any rate; we part with

an extra servant or two, manage our household economically, and in five years, were the public to stand my friend, I should receive much more than I have lost. But if I only pay all demands I shall be satisfied.

I shall be anxious to dispose of Mr. Charles so soon as his second year of Oxford is ended. I think of trying to get him into some diplomatic line, for which his habits and manners seem to suit him well.

I might certainly have borrowed large sums. But to what good purpose? I must have owed that money, and a sense of obligation besides. Now, as I stand, the Banks are extremely sensible that I have been the means of great advantages to their establishments, and have afforded me all the facilities I can desire to make my payments; and as they gained by my prosperity, they are handsomely disposed to be indulgent to my adversity, and what can an honest man wish for more?

Many people will think that because I see company easily my pleasures depend on society. But this is not the case; I am by nature a very lonely animal, and enjoy myself much at getting rid from a variety of things connected with public business, etc., which I did because they were fixed on me, but I am particularly happy to be rid of. And now let the matter be at rest for ever. It is a bad business, but might have been much worse.

I am, my dear friends,

Most truly yours,

WALTER SCOTT.

[Æt. 58?]

To Mrs. Hughes

[TOM PURDIE]

[1829?]

My dear Mrs. Hughes,—

Were you ever engaged in a fair bout of setting to rights? but I need not ask; I know how little you would mind what annoys my ponderous person so much, and in my mind's eye I see you riding on the whirlwind and directing the storm like the fairy Whippity Stourie herself. Dr. Hughes will comprehend the excess of my annoyance in the task of turning all my books over each other to give a half yearly review of the lost, stolen, and

strayed, which disturbs my temper as much as the gallery stairs do my person. . . .

I have had a very severe loss in my old & faithful Gillian a Chriah, that is, Man of the belt, Thomas Purdie, and though I am on most occasions like Edward Bruce "who used not to make moan for others, & loved not that others should lament for him," yet on this occasion I have felt very acute sorrow. I was so much accustomed to the poor fellow that I feel as if I had lost feet & hands, so ready was he always to supply the want of either. Do I wish a tree to be cut down, I miss Tom with the Axe.—Do I meet a bad step, and there are such things in my walks as you well know, Tom's powerful arm is no more at my command. Besides all this, there is another grievance. I am naturally rather shy; you laugh when I say this, but it is very true; I *am* naturally shy, though bronzed over by the practice of the law and a good deal of commerce with the world. But it is inexpressibly disagreeable to me to have all the gradations of familiarity to go through, with another familiar, till we are sufficiently intimate to be at ease with him. . . .

[Æt. 23] SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE

1772–1834

To Thomas Poole

[coleridge as traveller]

May 29, 1796.

My dear Poole,—

This said caravan does not leave Bridgewater till nine. In the market place stands the hustings. I mounted it, and, pacing the boards, mused on bribery, false swearing, and other foibles of election times. I have wandered, too, by the river Parret, which looks as filthy as if all the parrots of the House of Commons had been washing their consciences therein. Dear gutter of Stowey! Were I transported to Italian plains, and lay by the side of the streamlet that murmured through an orange grove, I would think of thee, dear gutter of Stowey, and wish that I were poring on thee!

So much by way of rant. I have eaten three eggs,

swallowed sundries of tea and bread and butter, purely for the purpose of amusing myself! I have seen the horse fed. When at Cross, where I shall dine, I shall think of your happy dinner, celebrated under the auspices of humble independence, supported by brotherly love! I am writing, you understand, for no worldly purpose but that of avoiding anxious thoughts. Apropos of honey-pie, Caligula or Elagabalus (I forget which) had a dish of nightingales' tongues served up. What think you of the stings of bees? God bless you! My filial love to your mother, and fraternity to your sister. Tell Ellen Cruikshank that in my next parcel to you I will send my Haleswood poem to her. Heaven protect her and you and Sara and your mother and, like a bad shilling passed off between a handful of guineas,

Your affectionate friend and brother,
S. T. Coleridge.

P.S.—Don't forget to send by Milton * my old clothes, and linen *that once was clean, et cetera.* A pretty *periphrasis* that!

[Æt. 24]

To John Thelwall

[coleridge describes himself]

Saturday, November 19, [1796].
Oxford Street, Bristol.

. . . Your portrait of yourself interested me. As to me, my face, unless when animated by immediate eloquence, expresses great sloth, and great, indeed, almost idiotic good-nature. 'Tis a mere carcass of a face; fat, flabby, and expressive chiefly of inexpression. Yet I am told that my eyes, eyebrows, and forehead are physiognomically good; but of this the deponent knoweth not. As to my shape, 'tis a good shape enough if measured, but my gait is awkward, and the walk of the whole man indicates *indolence capable of energies.* I am, and ever have been, a great reader, and have read almost everything —a library cormorant. I am *deep* in all out of the way

* The carrier.

books, whether of the monkish times, or of the puritanical era. I have read and digested most of the historical writers; but I do not *like* history. Metaphysics and poetry and "facts of mind," that is, accounts of all the strange phantasms that ever possessed "your philosophy"; dreamers, from Thoth the Egyptian to Taylor the English pagan, are my darling studies. In short, I seldom read except to amuse myself, and I am almost always reading. Of useful knowledge, I am a so-so chemist, and I love chemistry. All else is *blank;* but I *will* be (please God) an horticulturalist and a farmer. I compose very little, and I absolutely hate composition, and such is my dislike that even a sense of duty is sometimes too weak to overpower it.

I cannot breathe through my nose, so my mouth, with sensual thick lips, is almost always open. In conversation I am impassioned, and oppose what I deem error with an eagerness which is often mistaken for personal asperity; but I am ever so swallowed up in the *thing* that I perfectly forget my *opponent.* Such am I. I am just going to read Dupuis' twelve octavos, which I have got from London. I shall read only one octavo a week, for I cannot *speak* French at all and I read it slowly.

My wife is well and desires to be remembered to you and your *Stella* and little ones. N.B.—Stella (among the Romans) was a man's name. All the *classics* are against you; but our Swift, I suppose, is authority for this unsexing.

Write on the receipt of this, and believe me as ever, with affectionate esteem,

Your sincere friend,
S. T. Coleridge.

[Æt. 24]

To Thomas Poole

[removing to nether stowey]

Sunday morning, [? December 18, 1796.]

My dear Poole,—

I wrote to you with improper impetuosity; but I had been dwelling so long on the circumstance of living near you, that my mind was thrown by your letter into the feelings of those distressful dreams where we imagine ourselves falling from precipices. I seemed falling from

the summit of my fondest desires, whirled from the height just as I had reached it.

We shall want none of the Woman's furniture; we have enough for ourselves. What with boxes of books, and chests of drawers, and kitchen furniture, and chairs, and our bed and bed-linen, etc., we shall have enough to fill a small waggon, and to-day I shall make enquiry among my trading acquaintance, whether it would be cheaper to hire a waggon to take them straight to Stowey, than to put them in the Bridgwater waggon. Taking in the double trouble and expense of putting them in the drays to carry them to the public waggon, and then seeing them packed again, and again to be unpacked and packed at Bridgwater, I much question whether our goods would be good for anything. I am very poorly, not to say ill. My face monstrously swollen—my recondite eye sits distent quaintly, behind the flesh-hill and looks as little as a tomtit's. And I have a sore throat that prevents my eating aught but spoon-meat without great pain. And I have a rheumatic complaint in the back part of my head and shoulders. Now all this demands a small portion of Christian patience, taking in our present circumstances. My apothecary says it will be madness for me to walk to Stowey on Tuesday, as, in the furious zeal of a new convert to economy, I had resolved to do. My wife will stay a week or fortnight after me; I think it not improbable that the weather may break up by that time. However, if I do not get worse, I will be with you by Wednesday or Thursday at the furthest, so as to be there before the waggon. Is there any grate in the house? I should think we might Rumfordize one of the chimneys. I shall bring down with me a dozen yards of green list. I can endure cold but not a cold room. If we can but contrive to make two rooms *warm* and *wholesome,* we will laugh in the faces of gloom and ill-lookingness.

I shall lose the post if I say a word more. You thoroughly and in every nook and corner of your heart forgive me for my letters? Indeed, indeed, Poole, I know no one whom I esteem more—no one friend whom I love so much. But bear with my infirmities! God bless you, and your grateful and affectionate

S. T. Coleridge.

[Æt. 25]

To his Wife

[THE VOYAGE TO GERMANY]

HAMBURG, September 19, 1798.

. . . Over what place does the moon hang to your eye, my dearest Sara? To me it hangs over the left bank of the Elbe, and a long trembling road of moonlight reaches from thence up to the stern of our vessel, and there it ends. We have dropped anchor in the middle of the stream, thirty miles from Cuxhaven, where we arrived this morning at eleven o'clock, after an unusually fine passage of only forty-eight hours. The Captain agreed to take all the passengers up to Hamburg for ten guineas; my share amounted only to half a guinea. We shall be there, if no fogs intervene, to-morrow morning. Chester was ill the whole voyage; Wordsworth shockingly ill; his sister worst of all, and I neither sick nor giddy, but gay as a lark. The sea rolled rather high, but the motion was pleasant to me. The stink of a sea cabin in a packet (what with the bilge-water, and what from the crowd of sick passengers) is horrible. I remained chiefly on deck. We left Yarmouth Sunday morning, September 16, at eleven o'clock. Chester and Wordsworth ill immediately. Our passengers were: ‡ Wordsworth, * Chester, S. T. Coleridge, a Dane, second Dane, third Dane, a Prussian, a Hanoverian and * his servant, a German tailor and his * wife, a French ‡ emigrant and * French servant, * two English gentlemen, and ‡ a Jew. All these with the prefix * were sick, those marked ‡ horribly sick. The view of Yarmouth from the sea is interesting; besides, it was English ground that was flying away from me. When we lost sight of land, the moment that we quite lost sight of it and the heavens all around me rested upon the water, my dear babes came upon me like a flash of lightning; I saw their faces so distinctly! This day enriched me with characters and I passed it merrily. Each of these characters I will delineate to you in my journal, which you and Poole alternately receive regularly as soon as I arrive at any settled place, which will be in a week. Till then I can do little more than give you notice of my safety and my faithful affection to you (but the jour-

nal will commence from the day of my arrival at London, and give every day's occurrence, etc.). I have it written, but I have neither paper or time to transcribe it. I trust nothing to memory. The Ocean is a noble thing by night; a beautiful white cloud of foam at momentary intervals roars and rushes by the side of the vessel, and stars of flame dance and sparkle and go out in it, and every now and then light detachments of foam dart away from the vessel's side with their galaxies of stars and scour out of sight like a Tartar troop over a wilderness. What these stars are I cannot say; the sailors say they are fish spawn, which is phosphorescent. The noisy passengers swear in all their languages, with drunken hiccups, that I shall write no more, and I must join them. Indeed, they present a rich feast for a dramatist. My kind love to Mrs. Poole (with what wings of swiftness would I fly home if I could find something in Germany to do her good!). Remember me affectionately to Ward, and my love to the Chesters (Bessy, Susan, and Julia) and to Cruickshank, etc., etc., Ellen and Mary when you see them, and to Lavinia Poole and Harriet and Sophy, and be sure to give my kind love to Nanny. I associate so much of Hartley's infancy with her, so many of his figures, looks, words, and antics with her form, that I shall never cease to think of her, poor girl! without [*sic*] interest. Tell my best good friend, my dear Poole! that all his manuscripts, with Wordsworth's Tragedy, are safe in Josiah Wedgwood's hands; and they will be returned to him together. Good-night, my dear, dear Sara!—"every night when I go to bed, and every morning when I rise," I will think with yearning love of you and of my blessed babies! Once more, my dear Sara! good-night.

Wednesday afternoon, four o'clock.—We are safe in Hamburg—an ugly city that stinks in every corner; house, and room worse than cabins, sea-sickness, or bilge-water! The hotels are all crowded. With great difficulty we have procured a very filthy room at a large expense; but we shall move to-morrow. We get very excellent claret for a trifle—a guinea sells at present for more than twenty-three shillings here. But for all particulars I must refer your patience to my journal, and I must get some proper paper—I shall have to pay a shilling or

eighteen pence with every letter. N.B.—Johnson the bookseller, without any poems sold to him, but purely out of affection conceived for me, and as part of anything I might do for him, gave me an order on Remnant at Hamburg for thirty pounds. The "Epea Pterœnta," an Essay on Population, and a "History of Paraguay," will come down for me directed to Poole, and for Poole's reading. Likewise I have desired Johnson to print in quarto a little poem of mine, one of which quartos must be sent to my brother, Rev. G. C., Ottery St. Mary, carriage paid. Did you receive my letter directed in a different hand, with the 30 l. banknote? The "Morning Post" and Magazine will come to you as before. If not regularly, Stuart desires that you will write to him. I pray you, my dear love! read Edgeworth's "Essay on Education"—read it heart and soul, and if you approve of the mode, teach Hartley his letters. I am very desirous that you should teach him to read; and they point out some easy modes. J. Wedgwood informed me that the Edgeworths were most miserable when children; and yet the father in his book is ever vapouring about their happiness. However, there are very good things in the work —and some nonsense.

Kiss my Hartley and Bercoo baby brodder (kiss them for their dear father, whose heart will never be absent from them many hours together). My dear Sara! I think of you with affection and a desire to be home, and in the full and noblest sense of the word, and after the antique principles of *Religion*, unsophisticated by Philosophy, will be, I trust, your husband faithful unto death,

S. T. Coleridge.

[Æt. 29]

To his Wife

[A visit to London]

King Street, Covent Garden,

[February 24, 1802.]

My dear Love,—

I am sure it will make you happy to hear that both my health and spirits have greatly improved, and I have small doubts that a residence of two years in a mild and

even climate will, with God's blessing, give me a new lease in a better constitution. You may be well assured that I shall do nothing rashly, but our journey thither I shall defray by letters to Poole and the Wedgwoods, or more probably addressed to Mawman, the bookseller, who will honour my drafts in return. Of course I shall not go till I have earned all the money necessary for the journey that I can. The plan will be this, unless you can think of any better. Wordsworth will marry soon after my return, and he, Mary, and Dorothy will be our companions and neighbours. Southey means, if it is in his power, to pass into Spain that way. About July we shall all set sail from Liverpool to Bordeaux. Wordsworth has not yet settled whether he shall be married from Gallow Hill or at Grasmere. But they will of course make a point that either Sarah shall be with Mary or Mary with Sarah previous to so long a parting. If it be decided that Sarah is to come to Grasmere, I shall return by York, which will be but a few miles out of the way, and bring her. At all events, I shall stay a few days at Derby,—for whom, think you, should I meet in Davy's lecture-room but Joseph Strutt? He behaved most affectionately to me, and pressed me with great earnestness to pass through Darley (which is on the road to Derby) and stay a few days at his house among my old friends. I assure you I was much affected by his kind and affectionate invitation (though I felt a little awkward, not knowing *whom* I might venture to ask after). I could not bring out the word "Mrs. Evans," and so said, "Your sister, sir? I *hope she* is well!"

On Sunday I dined at Sir William Rush's, and on Monday likewise, and went with them to Mrs. Billington's Benefit. 'Twas the "Beggar's Opera;" it was *perfection!* I seem to have acquired a new sense by hearing her. I wished you to have been there. I assure you I am quite a man of *fashion;* so many titled acquaintances and handsome carriages stopping at my door, and fine cards. And then I am such an exquisite judge of music and painting, and pass criticisms on furniture and chandeliers, and pay such very handsome compliments to all women of fashion, that I do verily believe that if I were to stay three months in town and have tolerable health

and spirits, I should be a Thing in vogue,—the very *tonnish* poet and Jemmy-Jessamy-fine-talker in town. If you were only to see the tender smiles that I occasionally receive from the Honourable Mrs. Damer! you would scratch her eyes out for jealousy! And then there's the *sweet* (N.B.—musky) Lady Charlotte ——! Nay, but I won't tell you her name,—you might perhaps take it into your head to write an anonymous letter to her, and distrust our little innocent amour.

Oh that I were at Keswick with my darlings! My Hartley and my fat Derwent! God bless you, my dear Sarah! I shall return in love and cheerfulness, and therefore in pleasurable convalescence, if not in health. We shall try to get poor dear little Robert into Christ's Hospital; that wretch of a Quaker will do nothing. The skulking rogue! just to lay hold of the time when Mrs. Lovell was on a visit to Southey; there was such low cunning in the thought.

Remember me most kindly to Mr. and Mrs. Wilkinson, and tell Mr. Jackson that I have not shaken a hand since I quitted him with more esteem and glad feeling than I shall soon, I trust, shake his with. God bless you, and your affectionate and faithful husband (notwithstanding the Honourable Mrs. D. and Lady Charlotte!),

S. T. Coleridge.

[Æt. 29]

To W. Sotheby

[Hartley and Derwent]

Greta Hall, Keswick,

Tuesday, September 27, 1802.

My dear Sir,—

The river is full, and Lodore is full, and silver-fillets come out of clouds and glitter in every ravine of all the mountains; and hail lies like snow upon their tops, and the impetuous gusts from Borrowdale snatch the water up high, and continually at the bottom of the lake it is not distinguishable from snow slanting before the wind—and under this seeming snow-drift the sunshine *gleams,* and over all the nether half of the Lake it is *bright* and *dazzles,* a cauldron of melted silver boiling! It is in very

truth a sunny, misty, cloudy, dazzling, howling, omniform day, and I have been looking at as pretty a sight as a father's eyes could well see—Hartley and little Derwent running in the green where the gusts blow most madly, both with their hair floating and tossing, a miniature of the agitated trees, below which they were playing, inebriate both with the pleasure—Hartley whirling round for joy, Derwent eddying, half-willingly, half by the force of the gust,—driven backward, struggling forward, and shouting his little hymn of joy. I can write thus to you, my dear sir, with a confident spirit; for when I received your letter on the 22nd, and had read the "family history," I laid down the sheet upon my desk, and sate for half an hour thinking of you, dreaming of you, till the tear grown cold upon my cheek awoke me from my reverie. May you live long, long, thus blessed in your family, and often, often, may you all sit around one fireside. Oh happy should I be now and then to sit among you—your pilot and guide in some of your summer walks! . . .

[Æt. 31]

To Robert Southey

[coleridge "thunders and lightens"]

Rickman's Office, H. of Commons,
February 20, 1804, Monday noon.

Dear Southey,—

The affair with Godwin began thus. We were talking of reviews, and bewailing their ill effects. I detailed my plan for a review, to occupy regularly the fourth side of an evening paper, etc., etc., adding that it had been a favorite scheme with me for two years past. Godwin very coolly observed that it was a plan which "no man who had a spark of honest pride" could join with. "No man, not the slave of the grossest egotism could unite in," etc. Cool and civil! I ask whether he and most others did not already do what I proposed in prefaces. "Aye! in *prefaces;* that is quite a different thing." I then adverted to the extreme rudeness of the speech with regard to myself, and added that it was not only a very rough,

but likewise a very mistaken opinion, for I was nearly if not quite sure that it had received the approbation both of you and of Wordsworth. "Yes, sir! just so! of Mr. Southey—just what I said," and so on *mŏrĕ Godwiniāno* in language so ridiculously and exclusively appropriate to himself, that it would have made you merry. It was even as if he was looking into a sort of moral looking-glass, without knowing what it was, and, seeing his own very, very Godwinship, had by a merry conceit christened it in your name, not without some annexment of me and Wordsworth. I replied by laughing in the first place at the capricious nature of his nicety, that what was gross in folio should become double-refined in octavo foolscap or *pickpocket* quartos, blind slavish egotism in small pica, manly discriminating self-respect in double primer, modest as maiden's blushes between boards, or in calf-skin, and only not obscene in naked sheets. And then in a deep and somewhat sarcastic tone, tried to teach him to speak more reverentially of his betters, by stating what and who they were, by whom honoured, by whom depreciated. Well! this gust died away. I was going home to look over his Duncity; he begged me to stay till his return in half an hour. I, meaning to take nothing more the whole evening, took a crust of bread, and Mary Lamb made me a glass of punch of most deceitful strength. Instead of half an hour, Godwin stayed an hour and a half. In came his wife, Mrs. Fenwick, and four young ladies, and just as Godwin returned, supper came in, and it was now useless to go (at supper I was rather a mirth-maker than merry). I was disgusted at heart with the grossness and vulgar insanocecity of this dim-headed prig of a philosophocide, when, after supper, his ill stars impelled him to renew the contest. I begged him not to goad me, for that I feared my feelings would not long remain in my power. He (to my wonder and indignation) persisted (I had not deciphered the cause), and then, as he well said, I did "thunder and lighten at him" with a vengeance for more than a hour and a half. Every effort of self-defence only made him more ridiculous. If I had been Truth in person, I could not have spoken more accurately; but it was truth in a war-chariot, drawn by the three Furies, and the reins had slipped out

of the goddess's hands! . . . Yet he did not absolutely give way till that stinging *contrast* which I drew between him as a man, as a writer, and a benefactor of society, and those of whom he had spoken so irreverently. In short, I suspect that I seldom, at any time and for so great a length of time, so continuously displayed so much power, and do hope and trust that never did I display one half the scorn and ferocity. The next morning, the moment when I awoke, O mercy! I did feel like a very wretch. I got up and immediately wrote and sent off by a porter, a letter, I dare affirm an affecting and eloquent letter to him, and since then have been working for him, for I was heart-smitten with the recollection that I had said all, all in the presence of his *wife*. But if I had known all I now know, I will not say that I should not have apologised, but most certainly I should not have made such an apology, for he confessed to Lamb that he should not have persisted in irritating me, but that Mrs. Godwin had twitted him for his prostration before me, as if he was afraid to say his life was his own in my presence. He admitted, too, that although he never to the very last suspected that I was tipsy, yet he saw clearly that something unusual ailed me, and that I had not been my natural self the whole evening. What a poor creature! To attack a man who had been so kind to him at the instigation of such a woman! And what a woman to instigate him to quarrel with *me*, who with as much power as any, and more than most of his acquaintances, had been perhaps the only one who had never made a butt of him—who had uniformly spoken respectfully to him. But it is past! And I trust will teach me wisdom in future.

I have undoubtedly suffered a great deal from a cowardice in not daring to repel unassimilating acquaintances who press forward upon my friendship; but I dare aver, that if the circumstances of each particular case were examined, they would prove on the whole honourable to me rather than otherwise. But I have had enough and done enough. Hereafter I shall show a different face, and calmly inform those who press upon me that my health, spirits, and occupation alike make it necessary for me to confine myself to the society of those with whom I have

the nearest and highest connection. So help me God! I will hereafter be quite sure that I do really and in the whole of my heart esteem and like a man before I permit him to call me friend.

I am very anxious that you should go on with your "Madoc." If the thought had happened to suggest itself to you originally and with all these modifications and polypus tendrils with which it would have caught hold of your subject, I am afraid that you would not have made the first voyage *as* interesting at least as it ought to be, so as to preserve entire the fit proportion of interest. But go on!

I shall call on Longman as soon as I receive an answer from him to a note which I sent. . . .

God bless you and

S. T. Coleridge.

[Æt. 34]

To his Wife

[a visit to sir george beaumont's]

[Farmhouse near Coleorton,]

December 25, 1806.

My dear Sara,—

By my letter from Derby you will have been satisfied of our safety so far. We had, however, been grossly deceived as to the equi-distance of Derby and Loughborough. The expense was nearly double. Still, however, I was in such torture and my boils bled, throbbed, and *stabbed* so *con furia,* that perhaps I have no reason for regret. At Coleorton we found them dining, Sunday, ½ past one o'clock. To-day is Xmas day. Of course we were welcomed with an uproar of sincere joy: and Hartley hung suspended between the ladies for a long minute. The children, too, jubilated at Hartley's arrival.* He has behaved very well indeed—only that when he could get out of the coach at dinner, I was obliged to be in incessant watch to prevent him from rambling off into the fields. He twice ran into a field, and to the further end of it, and once after the dinner was on table, I was out five

* Hartley was at this time ten years old.

minutes seeking him in great alarm, and found him at the further end of a wet meadow, on the marge of a river. After dinner, fearful of losing our places by the window (of the long coach), I ordered him to go into the coach and sit in the place where he was before, and I would follow. In about five minutes I followed. No Hartley! Halloing—in vain! At length, where should I discover him! In the same meadow, only at a greater distance, and close down on the very edge of the water. I was angry from downright fright! And what, think you, was Cataphract's excuse! "It was a misunderstanding, Father! I thought, you see, that you bid me go to the very same place, in the meadow where I was." I told him that he had interpreted the text by the suggestions of the flesh, not the inspiration of the spirit; and *his Wish* the naughty father of the baseborn Thought. However, saving and excepting his passion for field truantry, and his hatred of confinement (in which his fancy at least—

> Doth sing a doleful song about green fields;
> How sweet it were in woods and wild savannas;
> To hunt for food and be a naked man
> And wander up and down at liberty!),

he is a very good and sweet child, of strict honour and truth, from which he never deviates except in the form of sophism when he sports his logical false dice in the game of excuses. This, however, is the mere effect of his activity of thought, and his aiming at being clever and ingenious. He is exceedingly amiable toward children. All here love him most dearly: and your namesake takes upon her all the duties of his mother and darling friend, with all the mother's love and fondness. He is very fond of *her;* but it is very pretty to hear how, without any one set declaration of his attachment to Mrs. Wilson and Mr. Jackson, his love for them continually breaks out—so many things remind him of them, and in the coach he talked to the strangers of them just as if everybody *must* know Mr. J. and Mrs. W. His letter is only half written; so cannot go to-day. We all wish you a merry Christmas and many following ones. Concerning the London Lectures, we are to discuss it, William and I, this evening,

and I shall write you at full the day after to-morrow. To-morrow there is no post, but this letter I mean merely as bearer of the tidings of our safe arrival. I am better than usual. Hartley has coughed a little every morning since he left Greta Hall; but only such a little cough as you heard from him at the door. He is in high health. All the children have the hooping-cough; but in an exceedingly mild degree. Neither Sarah Hutchinson nor I ever remember to have had it. Hartley is made to keep at a distance from them, and only to play with Johnny in the open air. I found my spice-megs; but many papers I miss.

The post boy waits.

My love to Mrs. Lovell, to Southey and Edith, and believe me anxiously and forever,

Your sincere friend,

S. T. Coleridge.

[Æt. 41]

To Joseph Cottle

[laudanum]

April 26, 1814.

You have poured oil in the raw and festering wound of an old friend's conscience, Cottle! but it is *oil of vitriol!* I but barely glanced at the middle of the first page of your letter, and have seen no more of it—not from resentment (God forbid!), but from the state of my bodily and mental sufferings, that scarcely permitted human fortitude to let in a new visitor of affliction.

The object of my present reply is to state the case just as it is. First, that for ten years the anguish of my spirit has been indescribable, the sense of my danger staring, but the consciousness of my GUILT worse, far worse than all. I have prayed, with drops of agony on my brow, trembling not only before the justice of my Maker, but even before the mercy of my Redeemer. "I gave thee so many talents, what hast thou done with them?" Secondly, overwhelmed as I am with a sense of my direful infirmity, I have never attempted to disguise or conceal the cause. On the contrary, not only to friends have I stated the whole case with tears and the very bitterness of shame, but in two instances I have warned young men,

mere acquaintances, who had spoken of having taken laudanum, of the direful consequences, by an awful exposition of the tremendous effects on myself.

Thirdly, though before God I cannot lift up my eyelids, and only do not despair of his mercy, because to despair would be adding crime to crime, yet to my fellowmen I may say that I was seduced into the ACCURSED habit ignorantly. I had been almost bed-ridden for many months with swellings in my knees. In a medical journal, I unhappily met with an account of a cure performed in a similar case (or what appeared to me so), by rubbing of laudanum, at the same time taking a given dose internally. It acted like a charm, like a miracle! I recovered the use of my limbs, of my appetite, of my spirits, and this continued for a fortnight. At length the unusual stimulus subsided, the complaint returned, the supposed remedy was recurred to—but I cannot go through the dreary history.

Suffice it to say, that effects were produced which acted on me by terror and cowardice, of pain and sudden death, not (so help me God!) by any temptation of pleasure, or expectation, or desire of exciting pleasurable sensations. On the very contrary, Mrs. Morgan and her sister will bear witness, so far as to say, that the longer I abstained the higher my spirits were, the keener my enjoyment—till the moment, the direful moment, arrived when my pulse began to fluctuate, my heart to palpitate, and such a dreadful falling abroad, as it were, of my whole frame, such intolerable restlessness, and incipient bewilderment, that in the last of my several attempts to abandon the dire poison, I exclaimed in agony, which I now repeat in seriousness and solemnity, "I am too poor to hazard this." Had I but a few hundred pounds, but £200—half to send to Mrs. Coleridge, and half to place myself in a private madhouse, where I could procure nothing but what a physician thought proper, and where a medical attendant could be constantly with me for two or three months (in less than that time life or death would be determined), then there might be hope. Now there is none!! O God! how willingly would I place myself under Dr. Fox, in his establishment; for my case is a species of madness, only that it is a derangement, an utter im-

potence of the volition, and not of the intellectual faculties. You bid me rouse myself: go bid a man paralytic in both arms, to rub them briskly together, and that will cure him. "Alas!" he would reply, "that I cannot move my arms is my complaint and my misery."

May God bless you, and your affectionate, but most afflicted,

S. T. Coleridge.

[Æt. 43]

To James Gillman

[lamb's "archangel, a little damaged"]

42, Norfolk Street, Strand,
Saturday noon [April 13, 1816.]

My dear Sir,—

The very first half hour I was with you convinced me that I should owe my reception into your family exclusively to motives not less flattering to me than honourable to yourself. I trust we shall ever in matters of intellect be reciprocally serviceable to each other. Men of sense generally come to the same conclusion; but they are likely to contribute to each other's exchangement of view, in proportion to the distance or even opposition of the points from which they set out. Travel and the strange variety of situations and employments on which chance has thrown me, in the course of my life, might have made me a mere man of *observation,* if pain and sorrow and self-miscomplacence had not forced my mind in on itself, and so formed habits of *meditation.* It is now as much my nature to evolve the fact from the law, as that of a practical man to deduce the law from the fact.

With respect to pecuniary remuneration, allow me to say, I must not at least be suffered to make any addition to your family expenses—though I cannot offer anything that would be in any way adequate to my sense of the service; for that, indeed, there could not be a compensation, as it must be returned in kind, by esteem and grateful affection.

And now of myself. My ever wakeful reason, and the keenness of my moral feelings, will secure you from all

unpleasant circumstances connected with me, save only one, viz., the evasion of a specific madness. You will never *hear* anything but truth from me:—prior habits render it out of my power to tell an untruth, but unless carefully observed, I dare not promise that I should not, with regard to this detested poison, be capable of acting one. No sixty hours have yet passed without my having taken laudanum, though for the last week [in] comparatively trifling doses. I have full belief that your anxiety need not be extended beyond the first week, and for the first week I shall not, I must not, be permitted to leave your house, unless with you. Delicately or indelicately, this must be done, and both the servants and the assistant must receive absolute commands from you. The stimulus of conversation suspends the terror that haunts my mind; but when I am alone, the horrors I have suffered from laudanum, the degradation, the blighted utility, almost overwhelm me. If (as I feel for the *first time* a soothing confidence it will prove) I should leave you restored to my moral and bodily health, it is not myself only that will love and honour you; every friend I have (and thank God! in spite of this wretched vice, I have many and warm ones, who were friends of my youth and have never deserted me) will thank you with reverence. I have taken no notice of your kind apologies. If I could not be comfortable in your house, and with your family, I should deserve to be miserable. If you could make it convenient I should wish to be with you by Monday evening, as it would prevent the necessity of taking fresh lodgings in town.

With respectful compliments to Mrs. Gillman and her sister, I remain, dear sir, your much obliged

S. T. Coleridge.

[Æt. 46]

To James Gillman

[sea-bathing]

[Ramsgate, Postmark, August 20, 1819.]

My dear Friend,—

Whether from the mere intensity of the heat, and the restless, almost sleepless, nights in consequence, or from

incautious exposure to draughts; or whether simply the change of air and the sea bath was repairing the intestinal canal (and bad indeed must the road be which is not better than a *road a-mending*, a *hint which our revolutionary reformers* would do well to attend to) or from whatever cause, I have been miserably unwell for the last three days—but last night passed a tolerably good night, and, finding myself convalescent this morning, I bathed, and now am still better, having had a glorious tumble in the waves, though the water is still not cold enough for my liking. The weather, however, is evidently on the change, and we have now a succession of flying April showers, and needle rains. My bath is about a mile and a quarter from the Lime Grove, a wearisome travail by the deep crumbly sands, but a very pleasant breezy walk along the top of the cliff, from which you descend through a deep steep lane cut through the chalk rocks. The tide comes up to the end of the lane, and washes the cliff, but a little before or a little after high tide there are nice clean seats of rock with foot-baths, and then an expanse of sand, greater than I need; and exactly a hundred of my strides from the end of the lane there is a good, roomy, arched cavern, with an oven or cupboard in it, where one's clothes may be put free from the sand. . . . I find that I can write no more if I am to send this by to-day's post. Pray, *if* you can with *any sort* of propriety, do come down to me—to us, I suppose I ought to say. We are all as should be Βυτ μόνστρουσλυ φόρμαλ. . . .

God bless you and
S. T. C.

[Æt. 61]

To Adam Steinmetz Kennard
[within two weeks of the end]

Grove, Highgate, July 13, 1834.

My dear Godchild,—

I offer up the same fervent prayer for you now as I did kneeling before the altar when you were baptized into Christ, and solemnly received as a living member of His spiritual body, the church. Years must pass before you will be able to read with an understanding heart what

I now write. But I trust that the all-gracious God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, who by His only-begotten Son (all mercies in one sovereign mercy!) has redeemed you from evil ground, and willed you to be born out of darkness, but into light; out of death, but into life; out of sin, but into righteousness; even into "the Lord our righteousness,"—I trust that He will graciously hear the prayers of your dear parents, and be with you as the spirit of health and growth, in body and in mind. My dear godchild, you received from Christ's minister at the baptismal font, as your Christian name, the name of a most dear friend of your father's, and who was to me even as a son,—the late Adam Steinmetz, whose fervent aspirations and paramount aim, even from early youth, was to be a Christian in thought, word, and deed; in will, mind, and affections. I, too, your godfather, have known what the enjoyments and advantages of this life are, and what the more refined pleasures which learning and intellectual power can give; I now, on the eve of my departure, declare to you, and earnestly pray that you may hereafter live and act on the conviction, that health is a great blessing; competence, obtained by honourable industry, a great blessing; and a great blessing it is, to have kind, faithful, and loving friends and relatives; but that the greatest of all blessings, as it is the most ennobling of all privileges, is to be indeed a Christian. But I have been likewise, through a large portion of my later life, a sufferer, sorely affected with bodily pains, languor, and manifold infirmities; and for the last three or four years have, with few and brief intervals, been confined to a sick-room, and at this moment, in great weakness and heaviness, write from a sick-bed, hopeless of recovery, yet without prospect of a speedy removal. And I thus, on the brink of the grave, solemnly bear witness to you, that the Almighty Redeemer, most gracious in His promises to them that truly seek Him, is faithful to perform what he has promised; and has reserved, under all pains and infirmities, the peace that passeth all understanding, with the supporting assurance of a reconciled God, who will not withdraw His spirit from me in the conflict, and in His own time will deliver me from the evil one. Oh, my dear godchild! eminently blessed are

they who begin *early* to seek, fear, and love their God, trusting wholly in the righteousness and mediation of their Lord, Redeemer, Saviour, and everlasting High Priest, Jesus Christ. Oh, preserve this as a legacy and bequest from your unseen godfather and friend,

S. T. Coleridge.

[Æt. 29] FRANCIS LORD JEFFREY

1773–1850

To John Jeffrey

[the "edinburgh review"]

Edinburgh, 2d July, 1803.

My dear John,—

It will be a sad thing if your reformation be the cause of my falling off; yet it is certain that since you have begun to write oftener, my letters have begun to be more irregular, &c.

I am glad you have got our Review, and that you like it. Your partiality to my articles is a singular proof of your judgment. In No. 3, I do Gentz, Hayley's Cowper, Sir J. Sinclair, and Thelwall. In No. 4, which is now printing, I have Miss Baillie's Plays, Comparative View of Geology, Lady Mary Wortley, and some little ones. I do not think you know any of my associates. There is the sage Horner, however, whom you have seen, and who has gone to the English bar with the resolution of being Lord Chancellor; Brougham, a great mathematician, who has just published a book upon the Colonial Policy of Europe, which all you Americans should read; Rev. Sidney Smith, and P. Elmsley, two learned Oxonian priests, full of jokes and erudition; my excellent little Sanscrit Hamilton, who is also in the hands of Bonaparte at Fontainebleau; Thomas Thomson and John Murray, two ingenious advocates; and some dozen of occasional contributors, among whom, the most illustrious, I think, are young Watt of Birmingham, and Davy of the Royal Institution. We sell 2,500 copies already, and hope to do double that in six months, if we are puffed enough. I wish you could try if you can *répandre* us upon your continent, and use what interest you can with the liter-

ati, or rather with the booksellers of New York and Philadelphia. I believe I have not told you that the concern has now become to be of some emolument. After the fourth number the publishers are to pay the writers no less than *ten guineas* a sheet, which is three times what was ever paid before for such a work, and to allow £50 a number to an editor. I shall have the offer of that first, I believe, and I think I shall take it, with the full power of laying it down whenever I think proper. The publication is in the highest degree respectable as yet, as there are none but gentlemen connected with it. If it ever sink into the state of an ordinary bookseller's journal, I have done with it.

[Æt. 43]

To Mrs. Colden

[THOMAS MOORE; MISS EDGEWORTH; OLD ENGLAND]

Mardocks, 6th May, 1822.

My dear Fanny,—

I am on my way back to Scotland, after a three weeks' exile in London, and take the leisure of this fine summer morning to write you a long letter. I hope you are sensible of the compliment I pay you in taking this vast sheet of paper, which, to make it the more gracious, I have stolen from the quire on which my host, Sir James Mackintosh, is now writing his history.

I have been very much amused in London, though rather too feverishly, so that it is deliciously refreshing to get out of its stir and tumult, and sit down to recollect all I have seen and heard, amidst the flowers' freshness and nightingales of this beautiful country. I was a good deal among wits and politicians, of whom you would not care much to hear. But I also saw a good deal of Miss Edgeworth and Tommy Moore, and something of your countryman, Washington Irving, with whom I was very happy to renew my acquaintance. Moore is still more delightful in society than he is in his writings; the sweetest-blooded, warmest-hearted, happiest, hopefulest creature that ever set fortune at defiance. He was quite ruined about three years ago by the treachery of a deputy

in a small office he held, and forced to reside in France. He came over since I came to England, to settle his debts by the sacrifice of every farthing he had in the world, and had scarcely got to London when he found that the whole scheme of settlement had blown up, and that he must return in ten days to his exile. And yet I saw nobody so sociable, kind, and happy; so resigned, or rather so triumphant over fortune, by the buoyancy of his spirits, and the inward light of his mind. He told me a great deal about Lord Byron, with whom he had lived very much abroad, and of whose heart and temper, with all his partiality to him, he cannot say anything very favourable. There is nothing gloomy or bitter, however, in his ordinary talk, but rather a wild, rough, boyish pleasantry, much more like nature than his poetry.

Miss Edgeworth I had not seen for twenty years, and found her very unlike my recollection.

Have you any idea what sort of a thing a truly elegant English woman of fashion is? I suspect not; for it is not to be seen almost out of England, and I do not know very well how to describe it. Great quietness, simplicity, and delicacy of manners, with a certain dignity and self-possession that puts vulgarity out of countenance, and keeps presumption in awe; a singularly sweet, soft, and rather low voice, with remarkable elegance and ease of diction; a perfect taste in wit and manners and conversation, but no loquacity, and rather languid spirits; a sort of indolent disdain of display and accomplishments; an air of great good-nature and kindness, with but too often some heartlessness, duplicity, and ambition. These are some of the traits, and such, I think, as would most strike an American. You would think her rather cold and spiritless; but she would predominate over you in the long run; and indeed is a very bewitching and dangerous creature, more seductive and graceful than any other in the world; but not better nor happier; and I am speaking even of the very best and most perfect. We have plenty of loud, foolish things, good humoured, even in the highest society.

Washington Irving is rather low-spirited and silent in mixed company, but is agreeable, I think, tête à tête, and is very gentle and amiable. He is a good deal in fashion,

and has done something to deserve it. I hope you do not look on him in America as having flattered our old country improperly. I had the honour of dining twice with a royal duke, very jovial, loud, familiar, and facetious, by no means foolish or uninstructed, but certainly coarse and indelicate to a degree quite remarkable in the upper classes of society. The most extraordinary man in England is the man in whose house I now am.

I came down here yesterday by way of Haileybury, where I took up Malthus, who is always delightful, and brought him here with me. The two professors have gone over to the College to their lectures, and return to dinner. I proceed on my journey homeward in the evening. Would you like to know what old England is like? and in what it most differs from America? Mostly, I think, in the visible memorials of antiquity with which it is overspread; the superior beauty of its verdure, and the more tasteful and happy state and distribution of its woods. Every thing around you here is *historical,* and leads to romantic or interesting recollections. Gray-grown church towers, cathedrals, ruined abbeys, castles of all sizes and descriptions, in all stages of decay, from those that are inhabited to those in whose moats ancient trees are growing, and ivy mantling over their mouldered fragments. Within sight of this house, for instance, there are the remains of the palace of Hunsden, where Queene Elizabeth passed her childhood, and Theobalds, where King James had his hunting-seat, and the *Rye-house,* where Rumbold's plot was laid, and which is still occupied by a maltster—such is the permanency of habits and professions in this ancient country. Then there are two gigantic oak stumps, with a few fresh branches still, which are said to have been planted by Edward the III., and massive stone bridges over lazy waters; and churches that look as old as Christianity; and beautiful groups of branchy trees; and a verdure like nothing else in the universe; and all the cottages and lawns fragrant with sweet-brier and violets, and glowing with purple lilacs and white elders; and antique villages scattering round wide bright greens; with old trees and ponds, and a massive pair of oaken stocks preserved from the days of Alfred. With you everything is new, and glaring, and angular, and

withal rather frail, slight, and perishable; nothing soft, and mellow, and venerable, or that looks as if it would ever become so. I will not tell you about Scotland after this. It has not these characters of ancient wealth and population, but beauties of another kind, which you must come and see.

[Æt. 70]

To Charles Dickens

[A "mischievous onslaught"]

Edinburgh, 26th December, 1843.

Blessings on your kind heart, my dear Dickens! and may it always be as light and full as it is kind, and a fountain of kindness to all within reach of its beatings! We are all charmed with your Carol; chiefly, I think, for the genuine *goodness* which breathes all through it, and is the true inspiring angel by which its genius has been awakened. The whole scene of the Cratchetts is like the dream of a beneficent angel in spite of its broad reality; and little *Tiny Tim,* in life and death almost as sweet and as touching as Nelly. And then the school-day scene, with that large-hearted, delicate sister, and her true inheritor, with his gall-lacking liver, and milk of human kindness for blood, and yet all so natural and so humbly and serenely happy! Well, you should be happy yourself, for you may be sure you have done more good, and not only fastened more kindly feelings, but prompted more positive acts of beneficence, by this little publication, than can be traced to all the pulpits and confessionals in Christendom, since Christmas 1842.

And is not this better than caricaturing American knaveries, or lavishing your great gifts of fancy and observation on Pecksniffs, Dodgers, Bailleys, and Moulds. Nor is this a mere crotchet of mine, for nine-tenths of your readers, I am convinced, are of the same opinion; and, accordingly, I prophesy that you will sell three times as many of this moral and pathetic Carol as of your grotesque and fantastical Chuzzlewits.

I hope you have not fancied that I think less frequently of you, or love you less, because I have not lately written

to you. Indeed, it is not so; but I have been poorly in health for the last five months, and advancing age makes me lazy and, perhaps, forgetful. But I do not forget my benefactors, and I owe too much to you not to have you constantly in my thoughts. I scarcely know a single individual to whom I am indebted for so much pleasure, and the means, at least, of being made better. I wish you had not made such an onslaught on the Americans. Even if it were all merited, it does mischief, and no good. Besides, you know that there are many exceptions; and, if ten righteous might have saved a city once, there are surely innocent and amiable men and women, and besides boys and girls, enough in that vast region to arrest the proscription of a nation. I cannot but hope, therefore, that you will relent, before you have done with them, and contrast your deep shadings with some redeeming touches. God bless you. I must not say more to-day. With most kind love to Mrs. Dickens, always very affectionately yours, &c.

Since writing this in the morning, and just as I was going to seal it, in comes another copy of the Carol, with a flattering autograph on the blank page, and an address in your own "fine Roman hand." I thank you with all my heart for this proof of your remembrance, and am pleased to think that, while I was so occupied about you, you had not been forgetful of me. Heaven bless you, and all that are dear to you.—Ever yours, &c.

[Æt. 73]

To Mrs. Empson

["A world to be loved"]

Craigcrook, Sunday, 23d May, 1847.

Bless you ever! and this is my first right earnest, tranquil, Sunday blessing, since my return; for, the day after my arrival, I was in a worry with heaps of unanswered letters and neglected arrangements. But to-day I have got back to my old Sabbath feeling of peace, love, and seclusion. Granny has gone to church, and the babes and doggies are out walking; and I have paced leisurely round my garden, to the songs of hundreds of hymning

blackbirds and thrushes, and stepped stately along my terrace, among the bleaters in the lawn below, and possessed my heart in quietness, and felt that there was sweetness in solitude, and that the world, whether to be left, or to be yet awhile lived in, is a world to be loved, and only to be enjoyed by those who find objects of love in it. And this is the sum of the matter; and the first and last and only enduring condition of all good people, when their fits of vanity and ambition are off them, or finally sinking to repose. Well, but here has been Tarley, come, of her own sweet will, to tell me, with a blush and a smile, and ever so little of a stammer, that she would like if I would walk with her; and we have been walking, hand in hand, down to the bottom of the quarry, where the water is growing, though slowly, and up to the Keith's sweetbriar alley, very sweet and resonant with music of birds, and rich with cowslips and orchis; and over the style back to our domains; and been sitting in the warm corner by the gardener's house, and taking cognizance of the promise of gooseberries and currants, of which we are to have pies, I think, next week; and gazing at the glorious brightness of the gentians, and the rival brightness of the peacock's neck; and discoursing of lambs and children, and goodness, and happiness, and their elements and connections. Less discussion, though, than usual, in our Sunday Tusculans, and more simple chat, as from one friend to another. And now she has gone to sharpen her teeth for dinner, and tell as much as she likes of our disceptations; and I come back to my letter. We met the boy and Ali early in our ramble, and he took my other hand for a while; but Ali would not trust him in the quarry, and so we parted—on the brink of perdition—and he roared lustily at sight of our peril. You beat us terribly as to weather still; for last night was positively cold with us, ther. at midnight down to 44, and a keen, clear, sharp-looking sky. To-day it has not yet been above 50, and there are but scanty sunbeams. All which forbodes, if it does not ensure, a late harvest, which will this year be as great a calamity as a scanty one, which it is likely enough to be also. I fear the most of the mortality from famine; and pestilence is still to come even for this year; and it is too painful

to think of. I persist in my early rising, and am down at breakfast every morning at 9½; so that you had better be putting yourselves in training, if you mean, as I hope you do, to join with me in the rites of that national meal. I rather think, too, that I am better than my average at Shanklin; though I do not ascribe this either to those virtuous exertions, or the sanitary influence of my court work, and should be at a loss, indeed, to point out any specific amendment. . . . .

[Æt. 33] ROBERT SOUTHEY

1774–1843

To Joseph Cottle

[a "dear old friend and benefactor"]

Greta Hall, April 20, 1808.

My dear Cottle,

On opening a box to-day, the contents of which I had not seen since the winter of 1799, your picture made its appearance. Of all Robert Hancock's performances it is infinitely the best. I cannot conceive a happier likeness. I have been thinking of you and of old times ever since it came to light. I have been reading your Fall of Cambria, and in the little interval that remains before supper must talk to you in reply to your letter.

What you say of my copyrights affected me very much. Dear Cottle, set your heart at rest on that subject. It ought to be at rest. These were yours, fairly bought, and fairly sold. You bought them on the chance of their success, which no London book-seller would have done; and had they not been bought, they could not have been published at all. Nay, if you had not purchased Joan of Arc, the poem never would have existed, nor should I, in all probability, ever have obtained that reputation which is the capital on which I subsist, nor that power which enables me to support it.

But this is not all. Do you suppose, Cottle, that I have forgotten those true and most essential acts of friendship which you showed me when I stood most in need of them? Your house was my house when I had no other. The very money with which I bought my wedding-ring and paid

my marriage fees, was supplied by you. It was with your sisters I left Edith during my six months' absence, and for the six months after my return it was from you that I received, week by week, the little on which we lived, till I was enabled to live by other means. It is not the settling of a cash account that can cancel obligations like these. You are in the habit of preserving your letters, and if you were not, I would entreat you to preserve *this,* that it might be seen hereafter. Sure I am, there never was a more generous or a kinder heart than yours; and you will believe me when I add, that there does not live that man upon earth whom I remember with more gratitude and more affection. My head throbs and my eyes burn with these recollections. Good night! my dear old friend and benefactor.

R. S.

[Æt. 45]

To Bertha, Kate, and Isabel Southey
[on being "ell-ell-deed"]

June 26, 1820.

Bertha, Kate, and Isabel, you have been very good girls, and have written me very nice letters, with which I was much pleased. This is the last letter which I can write in return; and as I happen to have a quiet hour to myself, here at Streatham, on Monday noon, I will employ that hour in relating to you the whole history and manner of my being ell-ell-deed at Oxford by the Vice-Chancellor.

You must know, then, that because I had written a great many good books, and more especially the Life of Wesley, it was made known to me by the Vice-Chancellor, through Mr. Heber, that the University of Oxford were desirous of showing me the only mark of honour in their power to bestow, which was that of making me an LL.D., that is to say, a doctor of laws.

Now, you are to know that some persons are ell-ell-deed every year at Oxford, at the great annual meeting which is called the Commemoration. There are two reasons for this; first, that the university may do itself honour, by bringing persons of distinction to receive the degree pub-

licly as a mark of honour; and, secondly, that certain persons in inferior offices may share in the fees paid by those upon whom the ceremony of ell-ell-deeing is performed. For the first of these reasons the Emperor Alexander was made a Doctor of Laws at Oxford, the King of Prussia, and old Blucher, and Platoff. And for the second, the same degree is conferred upon noblemen, and persons of fortune and consideration who are any ways connected with the university, or city, or county of Oxford.

The ceremony of ell-ell-deeing is performed in a large circular building called the theatre, of which I will show you a print when I return, and this theatre is filled with people. The undergraduates (that is, the young men who are called Cathedrals at Keswick) entirely fill the gallery. Under the gallery there are seats, which are filled with ladies in full dress, separated from the gentlemen. Between these two divisions of the ladies are seats for the heads of houses, and the doctors of law, physic, and divinity. In the middle of these seats is the Vice-Chancellor, opposite the entrance which is under the orchestra. On the right and left are two kind of pulpits, from which the prize essays and poems are recited. The area, or middle of the theatre, is filled with bachelors and masters of arts, and with as many strangers as can obtain admission. Before the steps which lead up to the seats of the doctors, and directly in front of the Vice-Chancellor, a wooden bar is let down, covered with red cloth, and on each side of this the beadles stand in their robes.

When the theatre is full, the Vice-Chancellor, and the heads of houses, and the doctors enter: those persons who are to be ell-ell-deed remain without in the divinity schools, in their robes, till the convocation have signified their assent to the ell-ell-deeing, and then they are led into the theatre, one after another in a line, into the middle of the area, the people just making a lane for them. The professor of civil law, Dr. Phillimore, went before, and made a long speech in Latin, telling the Vice-Chancellor and the dignissimi doctores what excellent persons we were who were now to be ell-ell-deed. Then he took us one by one by the hand, and presented each in his turn, pronouncing his name aloud, saying who and

what he was, and calling him many laudatory names ending in issimus. The audience then cheered loudly to show their approbation of the person; the Vice-Chancellor stood up, and repeating the first words in issime, ell-ell-deed him; the beadles lifted up the bar of separation, and the new-made doctor went up the steps and took his seat among the dignissimi doctores.

Oh Bertha, Kate, and Isabel, if you had seen me that day! I was like other issimis, dressed in a great robe of the finest scarlet cloth, with sleeves of rose-coloured silk, and I had in my hand a black velvet cap like a beef-eater, for the use of which dress I paid one guinea for that day. Dr. Phillimore, who was an old school-fellow of mine, and a very good man, took me by the hand in my turn, and presented me; upon which there was a great clapping of hands and huzzaing at my name. When that was over, the Vice-Chancellor stood up, and said these words whereby I was ell-ell-deed:—"Doctissime et ornatissime vir, ego, pro auctoritate meâ et totius universitatis hujus, admitto te ad gradum doctoris in jure civili, honoris causâ." These were the words which ell-ell-deed me; and then the bar was lifted up, and I seated myself among the doctors.

Little girls, you know it might be proper for me, now, to wear a large wig, and to be called Doctor Southey, and to become very severe, and leave off being a comical papa. And if you should find that ell-ell-deeing has made this difference in me you will not be surprised. However, I shall not come down in a wig, neither shall I wear my robes at home.

God bless you all!

Your affectionate Father,

R. Southey.

[Æt. 61]

To Edward Moxon

[recollections of charles lamb]

Keswick, Feb. 2, 1836.

My dear Sir,—

I have been too closely engaged in clearing off the second volume of Cowper to reply to your inquiries concerning poor Lamb sooner. His acquaintance with Cole-

ridge began at Christ's Hospital; Lamb was some two years, I think, his junior. Whether he was ever one of the *Grecians* there, might be ascertained, I suppose, by inquiring. My own impression is, that he was not. Coleridge introduced me to him in the winter of 1794-5, and to George Dyer also, from whom, if his memory has not failed, you might probably learn more of Lamb's early history than from any other person. Lloyd, Wordsworth, and Hazlitt became known to him through their connection with Coleridge.

When I saw the family (one evening only, and at that time), they were lodging somewhere near Lincoln's Inn, on the western side (I forget the street), and were evidently in uncomfortable circumstances. The father and mother were both living; and I have some dim recollection of the latter's invalid appearance. The father's senses had failed him before that time. He published some poems in quarto. Lamb showed me once an imperfect copy: the Sparrow's Wedding was the title of the longest piece, and this was the author's favourite; he liked, in his dotage, to hear Charles read it.

His most familiar friend, when I first saw him, was White, who held some office at Christ's Hospital, and continued intimate with him as long as he lived. You know what Elia says of him. He and Lamb were joint authors of the Original Letters of Falstaff. Lamb, I believe, first appeared as an author in the second edition of Coleridge's Poems (Bristol, 1797), and, secondly, in the little volume of blank verse with Lloyd (1798). Lamb, Lloyd, and White were inseparable in 1798; the two latter at one time lodged together, though no two men could be imagined more unlike each other. Lloyd had no drollery in his nature; White seemed to have nothing else. You will easily understand how Lamb could sympathise with both.

Lloyd, who used to form sudden friendships, was all but a stranger to me, when unexpectedly he brought Lamb down to visit me at a little village (Burton) near Christ Church, in Hampshire, where I was lodging in a very humble cottage. This was in the summer of 1797, and then, or in the following year, my correspondence with Lamb began. I saw more of him in 1802 than at any

other time, for I was then six months resident in London. His visit to this country was before I came to it; it must have been either in that or the following year: it was to Lloyd and to Coleridge.

I had forgotten one of his school-fellows, who is still living—C. V. Le Grice, a clergyman at or near Penzance. From him you might learn something of his boyhood.

Cottle has a good likeness of Lamb, in chalk, taken by an artist named Robert Hancock, about the year 1798. It looks older than Lamb was at that time; but he was old-looking.

Coleridge introduced him to Godwin, shortly after the first number of the Anti-Jacobin Magazine and Review was published, with a caricature of Gillray's, in which Coleridge and I were introduced with asses's heads, and Lloyd and Lamb as toad and frog. Lamb got warmed with whatever was on the table, became disputatious, and said things to Godwin which made him quietly say, "Pray, Mr. Lamb, are you toad or frog?" Mrs. Coleridge will remember the scene, which was to her sufficiently uncomfortable. But the next morning S.T.C. called on Lamb, and found Godwin breakfasting with him, from which time their intimacy began.

His angry letter to me in the Magazine arose out of a notion that an expression of mine in the Quarterly Review would hurt the sale of Elia; some one, no doubt, had said that it would. I meant to serve the book, and very well remember how the offence happened. I had written that it wanted nothing to render it altogether delightful but a *saner* religious feeling. *This* would have been the proper word if any other person had written the book. Feeling its extreme unfitness as soon as it was written, I altered it immediately for the first word which came into my head, intending to re-model the sentence when it should come to me in the proof; and that proof never came. There can be no objection to your printing all that passed upon the occasion, beginning with the passage in the Quarterly Review, and giving his letter.

I have heard Coleridge say that, in a fit of derangement, Lamb fancied himself to be young Norval. He told me this in relation to one of his poems.

If you print my lines to him upon his Album Verses,

I will send you a corrected copy. You received his letters, I trust, which Cuthbert took with him to town in October. I wish they had been more, and wish, also, that I had more to tell you concerning him, and what I have told were of more value. But it is from such fragments of recollection, and such imperfect notices, that the materials for biography must, for the most part, be collected.

Yours very truly,
ROBERT SOUTHEY.

[Æt. 64] WALTER SAVAGE LANDOR
1775–1864

To MISS ROSE PAYNTER
[A DOG WITH PLUCK]

[BATH, September 23, 1839.]

Dear Rose,—

It is true enough that you have not heard from me for a long time; and the reason is not that I am idle, which I am, but because I hoped, from the long absence of all letters from Passy, that you surely were on your way to Bath. Otherwise not only should I have written, but have been, long ere this time, in Devonshire. Tell Mama that I might safely have been entrusted with the *tapis,* or, even with everything *sur le tapis.* There is no commission of hers which I would not have executed, at least carefully. I am indeed quite as idle as usual.

I never sprain,
Dear Rose! my brain;
And if I did,
The Lord forbid
That you should set it strait again:
For I have seen,
O haughty Queen!
The tears and sighs
That fall and rise
Where your ungentle hand hath been.

No wonder you ask me whether you are not most barbarous: I will answer for it you are. I scarcely know any man but myself who is out of your martyrology. I

am like one of the Saints (no doubt of that—you will say) I mean I am like one of those who look quietly on and take delight in seeing the most beautiful of the Creation execute the Creator's will. But I do not approve of your making more people mad and desperate.

By the by, I met Sir Dudley Hill in town. He told me the wonderful news that a relation of his (the name too great to be communicated to me) was an admirer of yours. Never say, after this, that we acquire but little information in the great world. Speaking of Bath, you say—"for the short time we shall remain there." This disquiets me. Is it not too much to lose *one* of your family? But there is good cause shown; and when the same good cause is shown again, we must submit—more than submit—give up one half of the heart to gladness, while the other half is devoured by grief.

If your family is really to continue but a little while in Bath pray let me know it. I have not been very importunate in my entreaties to hear often from you; for the pleasures of those I love have always been and always will be the highest of my gratifications; and I do not ask you now to shorten a ride or a walk or a conversation, but, at any moment, when you really have nothing else to do or to think about, tell me if my delightful evenings in Gt. Bedford Street are soon to close. I sadly fear your wishes in regard to the picture are expressed too late. But I will write by this very post and signify them. The "Book of Beauty" is always sent to America by the first of October. To-morrow I will set out for Torquay, and return by the middle of the next month.

If Mrs. Paynter thinks I can do anything in the decoration of her house, better than the servant, I will return sooner and try my hand at it. Your account of Sophy has removed from me a heavy load of anxiety. That horrible pleurisy frightened me. I can bear pain passably well myself: it is only when it rebounds from my friends that I have not the courage to face it. You would have laught at me the other day when a lady was my protectress. I was over at Marston to see the Boyles when (tell the Admiral if he is with you) I delivered his message to Sir Courtney. In the courtyard was a magnificent black Newfoundland dog. No sooner I had

entered the gate than, before I could deliver my credentials, or make the sign of dog-freemasonry, he seized my leg. A swinging box on the ear was opposed to this manœuvre. My Newfoundlander had what the boxers (not very elegantly) call *pluck*. He renewed the attack, despite some severe appellations and admirable parasol-thrusts of Miss Boyle. However she conquered him—for neither my box on the ear nor a kick at the second round, which sent him upon his back, made him give in. We were pretty good friends at last, although I told him I should trouble him, at his leisure, just to look over a certain article in my tailor's bill, which might as well be transferred to his account. Fred will think this rare fun—for several minutes it was rather serious. I would have declined the combat and have left my enemy alone with his glory had there been any escape.

Believe me, dear Rose,
Yours very affectionately,
W. S. Landor.

[Æt. 68]

To the Editor of the "Examiner"
[a "polygonal character"]

August 17, 1843.

Sir,—

The prosecution with which you are threatened by Lord Brougham might well be expected from every facette of his polygonal character. He began his literary and political life with a scanty store of many small commodities. Long after he set out, the witty and wise Lord Stowell said of him, that he wanted only a little law to fill up the vacancy. His shoulders were not over-burdened by the well-padded pack he bore on them; and he found a ready sale, where such articles find the readiest, in the town of Edinburgh. Here he entered into a confederacy (the word *conspiracy* may be libellous) to defend the worst atrocities of the French, and to cry down every author to whom England was dear and venerable. A better spirit now prevails in the *Edinburgh Review,* from the generosity and genius of Macaulay. But in the days when Brougham and his confederates were writers in it, more falsehood and more malignity marked its pages than

any other Journal in the language. And here is the man who cries out he is wounded! the recreant who, screaming for help, aims a poisoned dagger at the vigorous breast that crushes him to the ground.

Had he no respect for the tenets by which he made his fortune? Has he none for a superiority of intellectual power which leaves to him superiority of station? This eminently bad writer and reasoner brings an action for slander on many counts, at the summit of which is "because it is *despicable.*" Now did ever man or cat fly at the eyes for a thing *beneath his notice:* and such is the meaning of *despicable* among us who have learnt Latin and who write English. What other man within the walls of Parliament, however hasty, rude, and petulant, hath exhibited such manifold instances of bad manners, bad feelings, bad reasonings, bad language, and bad law? They who cannot be what they want to be, resolve on notoriety in any shape whatever. Each House exhibits a specimen of this genus, pinned to the last pages of its Journals. Such notoriety can in no manner be more readily attained than by suddenly turning round on one leg, showing how agile is old age in this step, and then appealing to you whether the Terpsichoris has ever changed countenance or colour, from youth upwards. Meanwhile the toothless jaws are dropping, on both sides, the slaver of wrath and dotage.

How many things are published with impunity which are more injurious to a man's character, more detrimental to his fortune and interest, than a great proportion of those which the law calls libellous! Suppose an author, who has devoted his whole life to some particular study, writes a book upon it; suppose it is in any manner displeasing to Lord Brougham, whether on its own account or the author's; would he hesitate, has he ever hesitated, to inflict an irremediable wound? Dexterity in mischief is applauded; the sufferer is derided. Easily may a weaker, who watches the opportunity, trip up a stronger. Similar feats are the peculiar gratification of coarse and vulgar minds. Has no virtuous man of genius bled to death under the scourge of such a critic as Brougham? Years of application, if years were yet allowed him, would be insufficient to place him in the festive seat,

which a crueller hand than a murderer's made vacant. On the contrary, the accusations brought against Lord Brougham, by the *Examiner,* could be shown by his Lordship to be true or false within a single hour, and the fact be rendered apparent to the whole nation before nightfall. But here no vindictive spirit can exert its agency: no lightning of phosphorous runs along the benches of the Lords; no thunder as awful shakes the woolsack.

Wavering as he is by habit, malicious as he is by nature, it is evident that Lord Brougham says and does the greater part of his sayings and doings for no other purpose than to display his ability in defending them. He dazzles us by no lights of eloquence, he attracts us by not even a fictitious flue-warmth; but he perplexes and makes us stare and stumble by his angular intricacies and sudden glares. Not a sentence of his speeches or writings will be deposited in the memory as rich or rare; and even what is strange will be cast out of it for what is stranger, until this goes too. Is there a housewife who keeps a cupboardful of cups without handle or bottom; a selection of brokages and flaws?

I am, Sir, &c.,
W. S. Landor.

[Æt. 68]

To Miss Rose Paynter

["EVEN THE OLD ONES DO NOT DREAM OF DEATH"]

Bath, September 21st, [1843].

Dear Rose,—

. . . It delights me to know that you have been so well amused in Lancashire. You did right in not killing the grouse. Let men do these things if they will. Perhaps there is no harm in it—perhaps it makes them no crueller than they would be otherwise. But it is hard to take away what we cannot give—and life is a pleasant thing—at least to birds. No doubt the young ones say tender things to one another, and even the old ones do not dream of death. Talking of old ones, I come naturally to say a little of myself. I am an absolute cripple with the rheumatism. Perhaps a gallop round Doncaster racecourse would do me good, but I doubt my elasticity in

springing to the saddle. I thought old age a fable until now: I now find it a serious and sad calamity.

It is no wonder to me that you were enchanted with York Cathedral. Whatever is excellent raises your admiration and enthusiasm. In how deplorable a state was architecture throughout the whole of Europe, until these last thirty years, ever since the death of Wren. And he undervalued and misunderstood the marvels of the Gothic. I can hardly imagine that even the Athenians heard such music in their chaste and beautiful temples as you heard in the Cathedral at York. . . .

Mrs. —— tells me she and her family went over to Weston Super Mare. Of all the places on the earth or the waters, this is surely the most muddy and miserable. She found it so, although her voyage was not made in search of the picturesque. I have no other Bath news to offer you. I have exhausted my genius in the long letter I wrote to Mrs. Paynter this morning. Luckily she asked me for two *Examiners*. The best of me was in them. If you happen to receive them do not think me spiteful because I am severe. It devolved on me to punish two * evil-doers. I was called to it by many loud voices, and some of them from afar. I do confess to an intolerance of baseness, but I am very tolerant of the most adverse opinions on all subjects whatsoever.

Believe me, dear Rose,
Ever affectionately yours,
W. S. Landor.

[Æt. 24] CHARLES LAMB
1775–1834

To Robert Southey

["POOR EARTH-BORN COMPANIONS"]

March 20th, 1799.

[*Dear Southey,—*]

I am hugely pleased with your "Spider," † "your old freemason," as you call him. The first three stanzas are delicious; they seem to me a compound of Burns and

* One of them was Brougham. See preceding letter.
† *The Spider.* Written at Westbury in 1798.

Old Quarles, the kind of home-strokes, where more is felt than strikes the ear; a terseness, a jocular pathos, which makes one feel in laughter. The measure, too, is novel and pleasing. I could almost wonder Robert Burns in his lifetime never stumbled upon it. The fourth stanza is less striking, as being less original. The fifth falls off. It has no felicity of phrase, no old-fashioned phrase or feeling.

"Young hopes, and love's delightful dreams,"

savour neither of Burns nor Quarles; they seem more like shreds of many a modern sentimental sonnet. The last stanza hath nothing striking in it, if I except the two concluding lines, which are Burns all over. I wish, if you concur with me, these things could be looked to. I am sure this is a kind of writing, which comes ten-fold better recommended to the heart, comes there more like a neighbour or familiar, than thousands of Hamnels, and Zillahs, and Madelons. I beg you will send me the "Holly Tree," if it at all resemble this, for it must please me. I have never seen it. I love this sort of poems, that open a new intercourse with the most despised of the animal and insect race. I think this vein may be further opened. Peter Pindar hath very prettily apostrophized a fly; Burns hath his mouse and his louse; Coleridge less successfully hath made overtures of intimacy to a jackass, therein only following, at unresembling distance, Sterne, and greater Cervantes. Besides these, I know of no other examples of breaking down the partition between us and our "poor earth-born companions." It is sometimes revolting to be put in a track of feeling by other people, not one's own immediate thoughts, else I would persuade you, if I could, (I am in earnest,) to commence a series of these animals' poems, which might have a tendency to rescue some poor creatures from the antipathy of mankind. Some thoughts came across me: for instance—to a rat, to a toad, to a cockchafer, to a mole. People bake moles alive by a slow oven fire to cure consumption. Rats are, indeed, the most despised and contemptible parts of God's earth. I killed a rat the other day by punching him to pieces, and feel

a weight of blood upon me to this hour. Toads you know are made to fly, and tumble down and crush all to pieces. Cockchafers are old sport. Then again to a worm, with an apostrophe to anglers, those patient tyrants, meek inflictors of pangs intolerable, cool devils; to an owl; to all snakes, with an apology for their poison; to a cat in boots or bladders. Your own fancy, if it takes a fancy to these hints, will suggest many more. A series of such poems, suppose them accompanied with plates descriptive of animal torments, cooks roasting lobsters, fishmongers crimping skates, &c., &c., would take excessively. I will willingly enter into a partnership in the plan with you. I think my heart and soul would go with it too—at least, give it a thought. My plan is but this minute come into my head; but it strikes me instantaneously as something new, good, and useful, full of pleasure, and full of moral. If old Quarles and Wither could live again, we would invite them into our firm. Burns hath done his part.

Poor Sam. Le Grice! I am afraid the world, and the camp, and the university, have spoilt him among them. 'Tis certain he had at one time a strong capacity of turning out something better. I knew him, and that not long since, when he had a most warm heart. I am ashamed of the indifference I have sometimes felt towards him. I think the devil is in one's heart. I am under obligations to that man for the warmest friendship, and heartiest sympathy exprest both by word and deed and tears for me, when I was in my greatest distress. But I have forgot that! as, I fear, he has nigh forgot the awful scenes which were before his eyes when he served the office of a comforter to me. No service was too mean or troublesome for him to perform. I can't think what but the devil, "that old spider," could have sucked my heart so dry of its sense of all gratitude. If he does come in your way, Southey, fail not to tell him that I retain a most affectionate remembrance of his old friendliness, and an earnest wish to resume our intercourse. In this I am serious. I cannot recommend him to your society, because I am afraid whether he be quite worthy of it; but I have no right to dismiss him from *my* regard. He was at one time, and in the worst of times, my own

familiar friend, and great comfort to me then. I have known him to play at cards with my father, meal-times excepted, literally all day long, in long days too, to save me from being teased by the old man, when I was not able to bear it.

God bless him for it, and God bless you, Southey.

C. L.

[Æt. 25]

To Thomas Manning

[an exhibition of snakes]

Oct. 16th, 1800.

Dear Manning,—

Had you written one week before you did, I certainly should have obeyed your injunction; you should have seen me before my letter. I will explain to you my situation. There are six of us in one department. Two of us (within these four days) are confined with severe fevers; and two more, who belong to the Tower Militia, expect to have marching orders on Friday. Now six are absolutely necessary. I have already asked and obtained two young hands to supply the loss of the *feverites,* and, with the other prospect before me, you may believe I cannot decently ask leave of absence for myself. All I can promise (and I do promise, with the sincerity of St. Peter, and the contrition of Sinner Peter if I fail) that I will come the *very first spare week,* and go nowhere till I have been at Cambridge. No matter if you are in a state of pupilage when I come; for I can employ myself in Cambridge very pleasantly in the mornings. Are there not libraries, halls, colleges, books, pictures, statues? I wish you had made London in your way. There is an exhibition quite uncommon in Europe, which could not have escaped *your genius,*—a live rattlesnake, ten feet in length, and the thickness of a big leg. I went to see it last night by candle light. We were ushered into a room very little bigger than ours at Pentonville. A man and woman and four boys live in this room, joint tenants with nine snakes, most of them such as no remedy has been discovered for their bite. We walked into the middle, which is formed by a half-moon of wired boxes, all man-

sions of *snakes* — whip-snakes, thunder-snakes, pig-nose-snakes, American vipers, and *this monster*. He lies curled up in folds. Immediately a stranger entered (for he is used to the family, and sees them play at cards,) he set up a rattle like a watchman's in London, or near as loud, and reared up a head, from the midst of these folds, like a toad, and shook his head, and showed every sign a snake can show of irritation. I had the foolish curiosity to strike the wires with my finger, and the devil flew at me with his toad-mouth wide open; the inside of his mouth is quite white. I had got my finger away, nor could he well have bit me with his big mouth, which would have been certain death in five minutes. But it frightened me so much, that I did not recover my voice for a minute's space. I forgot, in my fear, that he was secured. You would have forgot too, for 'tis incredible how such a monster can be confined in small gauzy-looking wires. I dreamed of snakes in the night. I wish to heaven you could see it. He absolutely swelled with passion to the bigness of a large thigh. I could not retreat without infringing on another box; and just behind, a little devil not an inch from my back had got his nose out, with some difficulty and pain, quite through the bars! He was soon taught better manners. All the snakes were curious, and objects of terror: but this monster, like Aaron's serpent, swallowed up the impression of the rest. He opened his cursed mouth, when he made at me, as wide as his head was broad. I hallooed out quite loud, and felt pains all over my body with the fright.

I have had the felicity of hearing George Dyer read out one book of the *Farmer's Boy*. I thought it rather childish. No doubt, there is originality in it, (which, in your self-taught geniuses, is a most rare quality, they generally getting hold of some bad models, in a scarcity of books, and forming their taste on them,) but no *selection*. *All* is described.

Mind, I have only heard read one book.

Yours sincerely,

Philo-Snake,

C. L.

[Æt. 25]

To William Wordsworth

[London and the Lake Country]

Jan. 30th, 1801.

[*Dear Wordsworth,*—]

I ought before this to have replied to your very kind invitation into Cumberland. With you and your sister I could gang anywhere; but I am afraid whether I shall ever be able to afford so desperate a journey. Separate from the pleasure of your company, I don't much care if I never see a mountain in my life. I have passed all my days in London, until I have formed as many and intense local attachments as any of you mountaineers can have done with dead Nature. The lighted shops of the Strand and Fleet Street; the innumerable trades, tradesmen, and customers, coaches, waggons, playhouses; all the bustle and wickedness round about Covent Garden; the very women of the Town; the watchman, drunken scenes, rattles; life awake, if you awake, at all hours of the night; the impossibility of being dull in Fleet Street; the crowds, the very dirt and mud, the sun shining upon houses and pavements, the print-shops, the old book-stalls, parsons cheapening books, coffee-houses, steams of soups from kitchens, the pantomimes—London itself a pantomime and a masquerade—all these things work themselves into my mind, and feed me, without a power of satiating me. The wonder of these sights impels me into night-walks about her crowded streets, and I often shed tears in the motley Strand from fulness of joy at so much life. All these emotions must be strange to you; so are your rural emotions to me. But consider, what must I have been doing all my life, not to have lent great portions of my heart with usury to such scenes?

My attachments are all local, purely local. I have no passion (or have had none since I was in love, and then it was the spurious engendering of poetry and books,) for groves and valleys. The rooms where I was born, the furniture which has been before my eyes all my life, a book-case which has followed me about like a faithful dog, (only exceeding him in knowledge,) wherever I have moved, old chairs, old tables, streets, squares, where

I have sunned myself, my old school,—these are my mistresses. Have I not enough, without your mountains? I do not envy you. I should pity you, did I not know that the mind will make friends of any thing. Your sun, and moon, and skies, and hills, and lakes, affect me no more, or scarcely come to me in more venerable characters, than as a gilded room with tapestry and tapers, where I might live with handsome visible objects. I consider the clouds above me but as a roof beautifully painted, but unable to satisfy the mind: and at last, like the pictures of the apartment of a connoisseur, unable to afford him any longer a pleasure. So fading upon me, from disuse, have been the beauties of Nature, as they have been confinedly called; so ever fresh, and green, and warm are all the inventions of men, and assemblies of men in this great city. I should certainly have laughed with dear Joanna.

Give my kindest love, and my sister's, to D. and yourself; and a kiss from me to little Barbara Lewthwaite. Thank you for liking my play.*

C. L.

[Æt. 26]

To Walter Wilson
[an apology]

August 14th, 1801.

Dear Wilson,—

I am extremely sorry that any serious differences should subsist between us, on account of some foolish behaviour of mine at Richmond; you knew me well enough before, that a very little liquor will cause a considerable alteration in me.

I beg you to impute my conduct solely to that, and not to any deliberate intention of offending you, from whom I have received so many friendly attentions. I know that you think a very important difference in opinion with respect to some more serious subjects between us makes me a dangerous companion; but do not rashly infer, from some slight and light expressions which I

* Perhaps the tone of the letter is somewhat affected by Wordsworth's indifference to the merits of *John Woodvil*.

may have made use of in a moment of levity, in your presence, without sufficient regard to your feelings—do not conclude that I am an inveterate enemy to all religion. I have had a time of seriousness, and I have known the importance and reality of a religious belief. Latterly, I acknowledge, much of my seriousness has gone off, whether from new company, or some other new associations; but I still retain at bottom a conviction of the truth, and a certainty of the usefulness of religion. I will not pretend to more gravity of feeling than I at present possess; my intention is not to persuade you that any great alteration is probable in me; sudden converts are superficial and transitory; I only want you to believe that I have *stamina* of seriousness within me, and that I desire nothing more than a return of that friendly intercourse which used to subsist between us, but which my folly has suspended.

Believe me,
Very affectionately yours,
C. Lamb.

[Æt. 27]

To Thomas Manning

[the lake country; coleridge]

24th Sept., 1802, London.

My dear Manning,—

Since the date of my last letter I have been a traveller. A strong desire seized me of visiting remote regions. My first impulse was to go and see Paris. It was a triviai objection to my aspiring mind, that I did not understand a word of the language, since I certainly intend sometime in my life to see Paris, and equally certainly intend never to learn the language; therefore that could be no objection. However, I am very glad I did not go, because you had left Paris (I see) before I could have set out. I believe Stoddart promising to go with me another year, prevented that plan. My next scheme (for to my restless, ambitious mind London was become a bed of thorns) was to visit the far-famed peak in Derbyshire, where the Devil sits, they say, without breeches. *This* my purer mind rejected as indelicate. And my final resolve was, a tour to the Lakes. I set out

with Mary to Keswick, without giving Coleridge any notice, for my time, being precious, did not admit of it. He received us with all the hospitality in the world, and gave up his time to show us all the wonders of the country. He dwells upon a small hill by the side of Keswick, in a comfortable house, quite enveloped on all sides by a net of mountains: great floundering bears and monsters they seemed, all couchant and asleep. We got in in the evening, travelling in a post-chaise from Penrith, in the midst of a gorgeous sunshine, which transmuted all the mountains into colours, purple, &c., &c. We thought we had got into fairy-land. But that went off (as it never came again; while we stayed we had no more fine sunsets;) and we entered Coleridge's comfortable study just in the dusk, when the mountains were all dark with clouds upon their heads. Such an impression I never received from objects of sight before, nor do I suppose I can ever again. Glorious creatures, fine old fellows, Skiddaw, &c., I never shall forget ye, how ye lay about that night, like an intrenchment; gone to bed, as it seemed, for the night, but promising that ye were to be seen in the morning. Coleridge had got a blazing fire in his study; which is a large, antique, ill-shaped room, with an old-fashioned organ, never played upon, big enough for a church, shelves of scattered folios, an Æolian harp, and an old sofa, half bed, &c. And all looking out upon the last fading view of Skiddaw, and his broad-breasted brethren: what a night! Here we stayed three full weeks, in which time I visited Wordsworth's cottage, where we stayed a day or two with the Clarksons, (good people, and most hospitable, at whose house we tarried one day and night,) and saw Lloyd. The Wordsworths were gone to Calais. They have since been in London, and past much time with us: he is now gone into Yorkshire to be married. So we have seen Keswick, Grasmere, Ambleside, Ulswater, (where the Clarksons live,) and a place at the other end of Ulswater; I forget the name: to which we travelled on a very sultry day, over the middle of Helvellyn. We have clambered up to the top of Skiddaw, and I have waded up the bed of Lodore. In fine, I have satisfied myself that there is such a thing as that which tourists call *romantic,* which I very much suspected be-

fore: they make such a spluttering about it, and toss their splendid epithets around them, till they give as dim a light as at four o'clock next morning the lamps do after an illumination. Mary was excessively tired when she got about half-way up Skiddaw, but we came to a cold rill (than which nothing can be imagined more cold, running over cold stones,) and with the reinforcement of a draught of cold water she surmounted it most manfully. Oh, its fine black head, and the bleak air atop of it, with a prospect of mountains all about and about, making you giddy; and then Scotland afar off, and the border countries so famous in song and ballad! It was a day that will stand out, like a mountain, I am sure, in my life. But I am returned, (I have now been come home near three weeks; I was a month out,) and you cannot conceive the degradation I felt at first, from being accustomed to wander free as air among mountains, and bathe in rivers without being controlled by anyone, to come home and *work*. I felt very *little*. I had been dreaming I was a very great man. But that is going off, and I find I shall conform in time to that state of life to which it has pleased God to call me. Besides, after all, Fleet Street and the Strand are better places to live in for good and all than amidst Skiddaw. Still, I turn back to those great places where I wandered about, participating in their greatness. After all, I could not *live* in Skiddaw. I could spend a year, two, three years among them, but I must have a prospect of seeing Fleet Street at the end of that time, or I should mope and pine away, I know. Still, Skiddaw is a fine creature. My habits are changing, I think, *i.e.,* from drunk to sober. Whether I shall be happy or not remains to be proved. I shall certainly be more happy in a morning; but whether I shall not sacrifice the fat, and the marrow, and the kidneys, *i.e.,* the night, glorious care-drowning night, that heals all our wrongs, pours wine into our mortifications, changes the scene from indifferent and flat to bright and brilliant! O Manning, if I should have formed a diabolical resolution, by the time you come to England, of not admitting any spiritous liquors into my house, will you be my guest on such shameworthy terms? Is life, with such limitations, worth trying? The truth is, that

my liquors bring a nest of friendly harpies about my house, who consume me. This is a pitiful tale to be read at St. Gothard, but it is just now nearest my heart. Fenwick is a ruined man. He is hiding himself from his creditors, and has sent his wife and children into the country. Fell, my other drunken companion, (that has been: *nam hic cæstus artemque repono,*) is turned editor of a Naval Chronicle. Godwin continues a steady friend, though the same facility does not remain of visiting him often. That ——— has detached Marshall from his house; Marshall, the man who went to sleep when the "Ancient Mariner" was reading; the old, steady, unalterable friend of the Professor. Holcroft is not yet come to town. I expect to see him, and will deliver your message. Things come crowding in to say, and no room for 'em. Some things are too little to be told, *i.e.*, to have a preference; some are too big and circumstantial. Thanks for yours, which was most delicious. Would I had been with you, benighted, &c.! I fear my head is turned with wandering. I shall never be the same acquiescent being. Farewell. Write again quickly, for I shall not like to hazard a letter, not knowing where the fates have carried you. Farewell, my dear fellow.

C. Lamb.

[Æt. 30]

To William and Dorothy Wordsworth

[the "farewell to tobacco"]

Sept. 28th, 1805.

My dear Wordsworth, (or Dorothy rather, for to you appertains the biggest part of this answer by right,) I will not again deserve reproach by so long a silence. I have kept deluding myself with the idea that Mary would write to you, but she is so lazy, (or, which I believe is the true state of the case, so diffident,) that it must revert to me as usual. Though she writes a pretty good style, and has some notion of the force of words, she is not always so certain of the true orthography of them: and that, and a poor handwriting (in this age of female calligraphy), often deters her, where no other reason does.

We have neither of us been very well for some weeks

past. I am very nervous, and she most so at those times when I am; so that a merry friend, adverting to the noble consolation we were able to afford each other, denominated us, not unaptly, Gum-Boil and Tooth-Ache, for they used to say that a gum-boil is a great relief to a tooth-ache.

We have been two tiny excursions this Summer, for three or four days each, to a place near Harrow, and to Egham, where Cooper's Hill is: and that is the total history of our rustications this year. Alas! how poor a round to Skiddaw and Helvellyn, and Borrowdale, and the magnificent sesquipedalia of the year 1802! Poor old Molly! to have lost her pride, that "last infirmity of noble minds," and her cow. Fate need not have set her wits to such an old Molly. I am heartily sorry for her. Remember us lovingly to her; and in particular remember us to Mrs. Clarkson in the most kind manner.

I hope, by "southwards," you mean that she will be at or near London, for she is a great favourite of both of us, and we feel for her health as much as [is] possible for any one to do. She is one of the friendliest, comfortablest women we know, and made our little stay at your cottage one of the pleasantest times we ever past. We were quite strangers to her. Mr. C. is with you too; our kindest separate remembrances to him. As to our special affairs, I am looking about me. I have done nothing since the beginning of last year, when I lost my newspaper job; and having had a long idleness, I must do something or we shall get very poor. Sometimes I think of a farce, but hitherto all schemes have gone off; an idle brag or two of an evening, vapouring out of a pipe, and going off in the morning; but now I have bid farewell to my "sweet enemy," Tobacco, I shall perhaps set nobly to work. Hang work!

I wish that all the year were holiday; I am sure that indolence—indefeasible indolence—is the true state of man, and business the invention of the old Teazer, whose interference doomed Adam to an apron and set him a hoeing. Pen and ink, and clerks and desks, were the refinements of this old torturer some thousand years after, under pretence of "Commerce allying distant shores, promoting and diffusing knowledge, good," &c., &c.

I wish you may think this a handsome farewell to my

"Friendly Traitress." Tobacco has been my evening comfort and my morning curse for these five years; and you know how difficult it is from refraining to pick one's lips even, when it has become a habit. This poem is the only one which I have finished since so long as when I wrote "Hester Savory." I have had it in my head to do it these two years, but tobacco stood in its own light when it gave me headaches that prevented my singing its praises. Now you have got it, you have got all my store, for I have absolutely not another line. No more has Mary. We have nobody about us that cares for poetry; and who will rear grapes when he shall be the sole eater? Perhaps if you encourage us to show you what we may write, we may do something now and then before we absolutely forget the quantity of an English line for want of practice. The "Tobacco," being a little in the way of Withers (whom Southey so much likes), perhaps you will somehow convey it to him with my kind remembrances. Then everybody will have seen it that I wish to see it. I have sent it to Malta.

I remain, dear W. and D., yours truly,

C. Lamb.

[Æt. 30]

To Thomas Manning

["pearls of extraordinary magnitude"]

[Nov. 15, 1805.]

Dear Manning,—

Certainly you could not have called at all hours from two till ten, for we have been only out of an evening Monday and Tuesday in this week. But if you think you have, your thought shall go for the deed. We did pray for you on Wednesday night. Oysters unusually luscious; pearls of extraordinary magnitude found in them. I have made bracelets of them; given them in clusters to ladies. Last night we went out in despite, because you were not come at your hour.

This night we shall be at home; so shall we certainly, both, on Sunday, Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday. Take your choice, mind I don't say of one: but choose which evening you will not come, and come the other

four. Doors open at five o'clock. Shells forced about nine. Every gentleman smokes or not as he pleases.

C. L.

[Æt. 31]

To William Wordsworth

[*Mr. H.*——]

December 11th, 1806.

Mary's love to all of you—I wouldn't let her write.

Dear Wordsworth,—

Mr. H. came out last night, and failed. I had many fears; the subject was not substantial enough. John Bull must have solider fare than a *letter*. We are pretty stout about it; have had plenty of condoling friends; but, after all, we had rather it should have succeeded. You will see the prologue in most of the morning papers. It was received with such shouts as I never witnessed to a prologue. It was attempted to be encored. How hard!—a thing I did merely as a task, because it was wanted, and set no great store by; and *Mr. H.!!* The number of friends we had in the house—my brother and I being in public offices, &c.—was astonishing, but they yielded at length to a few hisses.

A hundred hisses! (Damn the word, I write it like kisses — how different!) — a hundred hisses outweigh a thousand claps. The former come more directly from the heart. Well, 'tis withdrawn, and there is an end.

Better luck to us.

C. Lamb.

(Turn over.)

P. S. Pray, when any of you write to the Clarksons, give our kind loves, and say we shall not be able to come and see them at Christmas, as I shall have but a day or two, and tell them we bear our mortification pretty well.

[Æt. 40]

To Miss Hutchinson

[illness of his sister]

Thursday, 19th Oct., 1815.

Dear Miss H.,—

I am forced to be the replier to your letter, for Mary * has been ill, and gone from home these five weeks yesterday. She has left me very lonely and very miserable. I stroll about, but there is no rest but at one's own fireside, and there is no rest for me there now. I look forward to the worse half being past, and keep up as well as I can. She has begun to show some favourable symptoms. The return of her disorder has been frightfully soon this time, with scarce a six months' interval. I am almost afraid my worry of spirits about the E. I. House was partly the cause of her illness, but one always imputes it to the cause next at hand; more probably it comes from some cause we have no control over or conjecture of. It cuts sad great slices out of the time, the little time, we shall have to live together. I don't know but the recurrence of these illnesses might help me to sustain her death better than if we had had no partial separations. But I won't talk of death. I will imagine us immortal, or forget that we are otherwise. By God's blessing, in a few weeks we may be making our meal together, or sitting in the front row of the Pit at Drury Lane, or taking our evening walk past the theatres, to look at the outside of them, at least, if not to be tempted in. Then we forget we are assailable; we are strong for the time as rocks;—"the wind is tempered to the shorn Lambs." Poor C. Lloyd, and poor Priscilla! I feel I hardly feel enough for him; my own calamities press about me, and involve me in a thick integument not to be reached at by other folks' misfortunes. But I feel all I can—all the kindness I can, towards you all—God bless you! I hear nothing from Coleridge.

Yours truly,

C. Lamb.

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* For letters by Mary Lamb, see pp. 124-128.

[Æt. 40]

To Thomas Manning
[an imaginary flight of time]

Dec. 25th, 1815.

Dear old friend and absentee,—

This is Christmas Day 1815 with us; what it may be with you I don't know, the 12th of June next year perhaps; and if it should be the consecrated season with you. I don't see how you can keep it. You have no turkeys; you would not desecrate the festival by offering up a withered Chinese Bantam, instead of the savoury grand Norfolcian holocaust, that smokes all around my nostrils at this moment from a thousand firesides. Then what puddings have you? Where will you get holly to stick in your churches, or churches to stick your dried tea-leaves (that must be the substitute) in? What memorials you can have of the holy time, I see not. A chopped missionary or two may keep up the thin idea of Lent and the wilderness; but what standing evidence have you of the Nativity? 'Tis our rosy-cheeked, home-stalled divines, whose faces shine to the tune of "Unto us a child is born," faces fragrant with the mince-pies of half a century, that alone can authenticate the cheerful mystery. I feel my bowels refreshed with the holy tide; my zeal is great against the unedified heathen. Down with the Pagodas—down with the idols—Ching-chong-fo—and his foolish priesthood! Come out of Babylon, O my friend! for her time is come; and the child that is native, and the Proselyte of her gates, shall kindle and smoke together! And in sober sense what makes you so long from among us, Manning? You must not expect to see the same England again which you left.

Empires have been overturned, crowns trodden into dust, the face of the western world quite changed. Your friends have all got old—those you left blooming; myself, (who am one of the few that remember you,) those golden hairs which you recollect my taking a pride in, turned to silvery and grey. Mary has been dead and buried many years: she desired to be buried in the silk gown you sent her. Rickman, that you remember active and strong, now walks out supported by a servant maid

and a stick. Martin Burney is a very old man. The other day an aged woman knocked at my door, and pretended to my acquaintance. It was long before I had the most distant cognition of her; but at last, together, we made her out to be Louisa, the daughter of Mrs. Topham, formerly Mrs. Morton, who had been Mrs. Reynolds, formerly Mrs. Kenney, whose first husband was Holcroft, the dramatic writer of the last century. St. Paul's church is a heap of ruins; the Monument isn't half so high as you knew it, divers parts being successively taken down which the ravages of time had rendered dangerous; the horse at Charing Cross is gone, no one knows whither; and all this has taken place while you have been settling whether Ho-hing-tong should be spelt with a—, or a—. For aught I see you might almost as well remain where you are, and not come like a Struldbrug into a world where few were born when you went away. Scarce here and there one will be able to make out your face. All your opinions will be out of date, your jokes obsolete, your puns rejected with fastidiousness as wit of the last age. Your way of mathematics has already given way to a new method, which after all is I believe the old doctrine of Maclaurin, new-vamped up with what he borrowed of the negative quantity of fluxions from Euler.

Poor Godwin! I was passing his tomb the other day in Cripplegate churchyard. There are some verses upon it written by Miss ——, which if I thought good enough I would send you. He was one of those who would have hailed your return, not with boisterous shouts and clamours, but with the complacent gratulations of a philosopher anxious to promote knowledge as leading to happiness; but his systems and his theories are ten feet deep in Cripplegate mould. Coleridge is just dead, having lived just long enough to close the eyes of Wordsworth, who paid the debt to Nature but a week or two before. Poor Col., but two days before he died he wrote to a bookseller, proposing an epic poem on the "Wanderings of Cain," in twenty-four books. It is said he has left behind him more than forty thousand treatises in criticism, metaphysics, and divinity, but few of them in a state of completion. They are now destined, perhaps, to wrap up spices. You see what mutations the busy hand

of Time has produced, while you have consumed in foolish voluntary exile that time which might have gladdened your friends—benefited your country; but reproaches are useless. Gather up the wretched reliques, my friend, as fast as you can, and come to your old home. I will rub my eyes and try to recognise you. We will shake withered hands together, and talk of old things—of St. Mary's Church and the barber's opposite, where the young students in mathematics used to assemble. Poor Crips, that kept it afterwards, set up a fruiterer's shop in Trumpington Street, and for aught I know resides there still, for I saw the name up in the last journey I took there with my sister just before she died. I suppose you heard that I had left the India House, and gone into the Fishmongers' Almshouses over the bridge. I have a little cabin there, small and homely, but you shall be welcome to it. You like oysters, and to open them yourself; I'll get you some if you come in oyster time. Marshall, Godwin's old friend, is still alive, and talks of the faces you used to make.

Come as soon as you can.

C. Lamb.

To the Same

[correcting the "false nuncio"]

Dec. 26th, 1815.

Dear Manning,—

Following your brother's example, I have just ventured one letter to Canton, and am now hazarding another (not exactly a duplicate) to St. Helena. The first was full of unprobable romantic fictions, fitting the remoteness of the mission it goes upon; in the present I mean to confine myself nearer to truth as you come nearer home. A correspondence with the uttermost parts of the earth necessarily involves in it some heat of fancy, it sets the brain agoing, but I can think on the half-way house tranquilly. Your friends then are not all dead or grown forgetful of you through old age, as that lying letter asserted, anticipating rather what must happen if you kept tarrying on forever on the skirts of creation, as there seemed a danger of your doing; but they are all tolerably well and in full and perfect comprehension of what is

meant by Manning's coming home again. Mrs. Kenny never lets her tongue run riot more than in remembrances of you. Fanny expends herself in phrases that can only be justified by her romantic nature. Mary reserves a portion of your silk, not to be buried in, (as the false nuncio asserts) but to make up spick and span into a bran-new gown to wear when you come. I am the same as when you knew me, almost to a surfeiting identity. This very night I am going to *leave off tobacco!* Surely there must be some other world in which this unconquerable purpose shall be realised. The soul hath not her generous aspirings implanted in her in vain. One that you knew, and I think the only one of those friends we knew much of in common, has died in earnest. Poor Priscilla! Her brother Robert is also dead, and several of the grown-up brothers and sisters, in the compass of a very few years. Death has not otherwise meddled much in families that I know. Not but he has his eye upon us, and is whetting his feathered dart every instant, as you see him truly pictured in that impressive moral picture, "The good man at the hour of death." I have in trust to put in the post four letters from Diss, and one from Lynn, to St. Helena, which I hope will accompany this safe, and one from Lynn, and the one before spoken of from me, to Canton. But we all hope that these letters may be waste paper. I don't know why I have forborne writing so long; but it is such a forlorn hope to send a scrap of paper straggling over wide oceans! And yet I know, when you come home, I shall have you sitting before me at our fireside just as if you had never been away. In such an instant does the return of a person dissipate all the weight of imaginary perplexity from distance of time and space! I'll promise you good oysters. Cory is dead that kept the shop opposite St. Dunston's; but the tougher materials of the shop survive the perishing frame of its keeper. Oysters continue to flourish there under as good auspices. Poor Cory! But if you will absent yourself twenty years together, you must not expect numerically the same population to congratulate your return which wetted the sea-beach with their tears when you went away. Have you recovered the breathless stone-staring astonishment into which you must have

been thrown upon learning at landing that an Emperor of France was living at St. Helena? What an event in the solitude of the seas! like finding a fish's bone at the top of Plinlimmon; but these things are nothing in our western world. Novelties cease to affect. Come and try what your presence can.

God bless you.—Your old friend,
C. Lamb.

[Æt. 42]

To William Ayrton

[A request for opera tickets]

Accountant's Office,
East India House,
Friday, Ap. 18, 1817.

Dear A.,—

I am in your debt for a very delightful evening — I should say two—but Don Giovanni in particular was exquisite, and I am almost inclined to allow Music to be one of the Liberal Arts; which before I doubted. Could you let me have 3 Gallery Tickets—don't be startled—they shall positively be the last—or 2 or 1—for the same, for to-morrow or Tuesday. They will be of no use for to-morrow if not put in the post *this day* addrest to me, Mr. Lamb, India House; if for any other evening, your usual blundering direction, No. 3 Middle Temple instead of 4 Inner Temple Lane will do. Yours,
Ch. Lamb.

To the Same

[another request]

Temple, 12 May [1817].

My dear friend—
Before I end—
Have you any
More orders for Don Giovanni
To give
Him that doth live
your faithful Zany?
Without raillery
I mean Gallery
ones.

For I am a person that shuns
All ostentation
And being at the top of the fashion,
And seldom go to operas
But *in formâ Pauperis.*
I go to the Play
In a very economical sort of way,
Rather to see
Than be seen.
Though I'm no ill sight
Neither
By candle light
And in some kinds of weather.
You might pit me
For weight
Against Kean.
But in a grand tragic scene
I'm nothing.
It would create a kind of loathing
To see me act Hamlet.
There'd be many a damn let
fly
At my presumption
If I should try
Being a fellow of no gumption.

By the way tell me candidly how you relish
This which they call the lapidary
Style?
Opinions vary.
The late Mr. Mellish
Could never abide it.
He thought it vile,
And coxcombical.
My friend the Poet Laureat
Who is a great lawyer at
Anything comical
Was the first who tried it
But Mellish could never abide it.

But it signifies very little what Mellish said,
Because he is dead.

For who can confute
A body that's mute?
Or who would fight
With a senseless sprite?
Or think of troubling
An impenetrable old goblin
That's dead and gone
And stiff as a stone—
To convince him with arguments pro and con
As if he were some live logician
Bred up at Merton
or Mr. Hazlitt the Metaphysician—
Ha! Mr. Ayrton—
With all your rare tone—

For tell me how should an apparition
List to your call,
Though you talk'd forever
Ever so clever
When his ear itself
By which he must hear or not hear at all
Is laid on the shelf?
Or put the case
(for more grace)
It were a female spectre—
How could you expect her
To take much gust
In long speeches
With her tongue as dry as dust
In a sandy place
Where no peaches
Nor lemons nor limes nor oranges hang
To drop on the drouth of an arid harangue,
or quench
With their sweet drench
The fiery pangs which the worms inflict
With their endless nibblings
Like quibblings
Which the corpse may dislike, but can ne'er contradict.
Ha! Mr. Ayrton!
With all your rare tone—

I am C. Lamb.

[Æt. 42]

To Charles Chambers
[favourite dishes]

1 Sept., 1817.

With regard to a John Dory, which you desire to be particularly informed about,—I honour the fish, but it is rather on account of Quin, who patronised it, and whose taste (of a *dead* man) I had as lieve go by as any body's, Apicius and Heliogabalus excepted—this latter started nightingales' brains and peacocks' tongues as a garnish. Else, in *itself,* and trusting to my own poor single judgment, it hath not the moist, mellow, oleaginous, gliding, smooth descent from the tongue to the palate, thence to the stomach, etc., as your Brighton turbot hath, which I take to be the most friendly and familiar flavour of any that swims—most genial and at home to the palate.

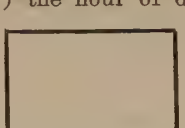
Nor has it, on the other hand, that fine falling-off flakiness, that obsequious peeling off (as it were like a sea onion) which endears your cod's-head and shoulders to some appetites, that manly firmness, combined with a sort of womanish coming-in-pieces which the same cod's-head and shoulders hath—where the *whole* is easily separable, pliant to a knife or spoon, but each *individual flake* presents a pleasing resistance to the opposed tooth—you understand me; these delicate subjects are necessarily obscure.

But it has a third flavour of its own, totally distinct from cod or turbot, which it must be owned may to some not injudicious palates render it acceptable; but to my unpractised tooth it presented rather a crude river-fish-flavour, like your pike or carp, and perhaps, like them, should have been tamed and corrected by some laborious and well-chosen sauce. Still I always suspect a fish which requires so much of artificial settings-off. Your choicest relishes (like native loveliness) need not the foreign aid of ornament, but are, when unadorned (that is, with nothing but a little plain anchovy and a squeeze of lemon) are then adorned the most. However, I shall go to Brighton again, next summer, and shall have an opportunity of correcting my judgment, if it is not sufficiently in-

formed. I can only say that when Nature was pleased to make the John Dory so notoriously deficient in outward graces (as, to be sure, he is the very rhinoceros of fishes, the ugliest dog that swims, except perhaps the sea satyr, which I never saw, but which they say is terrible)—when she formed him with so few external advantages, she might have bestowed a more elaborate finish on his parts internal, and have given him a relish, a sapor, to recommend him, as she made Pope a poet to make up for making him crooked.

I am sorry to find that you have got a knack of saying things which are not sure to show your wit. If I had no wit, but what I must show at the expense of my virtue or my modesty, I had as lieve be as stupid as —— at the tea warehouse. Depend upon it, my dear Chambers, that an ounce of integrity at our death-bed will stand us in more avail than all the wit of Congreve or ——. For instance, you tell me a fine story about Truss, and his playing at Leamington, which I know to be false, because I have advice from Derby that he was whipt through the town on that very day you say he appeared in some character or other for robbing an old woman at church of a seal ring. And Dr. Parr has been two months dead. So it won't do to scatter these random stories about among people that know anything. Besides, your forte is not invention. It is *judgment,* particularly shown in your choice of dishes. We seem in that instance born under one star. I like you for liking hare. I esteem you for disrelishing minced veal. Liking is too cold a word: I love you for your noble attachment to the fat, unctuous juices of deer's flesh and the green unspeakable of turtle. I honour you for your endeavours to esteem and approve of my favourite, which I venture to recommend to you as substitute for hare, bullock's heart, and I am not offended that you cannot taste it with *my* palate. A true son of Epicurus should reserve one taste peculiar to himself. For a long time I kept the secret about the exceeding deliciousness of the marrow of boiled knuckle of veal, till my tongue weakly ran out in its praises, and now it is prostitute and common. But I have made one discovery which I will not impart till my dying scene is over—perhaps it will be my last mouthful

in this world: delicious thought, enough to sweeten (or rather make savoury) the hour of death. It is a little square bit about this size, in or near the knuckle-bone of a fried joint of ——. Fat I can't call it, nor lean neither altogether; it is that beautiful compound which Nature must have made in Paradise, Park Venison, before she separated the two substances, the dry and the oleaginous, to punish sinful mankind: Adam ate them entire and inseparable, and this little taste of Eden in the knuckle-bone of a fried —— seems the only relique of a Paradisaical state. When I die, an exact description of its topography shall be left in a cupboard with a key, inscribed on which these words, "C. Lamb, dying, imparts this to C. Chambers, as the only worthy depository of such a secret." You'll drop a tear. . . .



[Æt. 47]

To William Wordsworth

[the loss of friends]

March 20th, 1822.

My dear Wordsworth,—

A letter from you is very grateful; I have not seen a Kendal postmark so long! We are pretty well, save colds and rheumatics, and a certain deadness to everything, which I think I may date from poor John's loss, and another accident or two at the same time, that have made me almost bury myself at Dalston, where yet I see more faces than I could wish. Deaths overset one, and put one out long after the recent grief. Two or three have died within the last two twelvemonths, and so many parts of me have been numbed. One sees a picture, reads an anecdote, starts a casual fancy, and thinks to tell of it to this person in preference to every other: the person is gone whom it would have peculiarly suited. It won't do for another. Every departure destroys a class of sympathies. There's Captain Burney gone! What fun has whist now? What matters it what you lead, if you can no longer fancy him

looking over you? One never hears anything, but the image of the particular person occurs with whom alone almost you would care to share the intelligence. Thus one distributes oneself about; and now for so many parts of me I have lost the market. Common natures do not suffice me. Good people, as they are called, will not serve. I want individuals. I am made up of queer points, and I want so many answering needles. The going away of friends does not make the remainder more precious. It takes so much from them as there was a common link. A. B. and C. make a party. A. dies. B. not only loses A.; but all A.'s part in C. C. loses A.'s part in B., and so the alphabet sickens by subtraction of interchangeables. I express myself muddily, *capite dolente*. I have a dulling cold. My theory is to enjoy life, but my practice is against it. I grow ominously tired of official confinement. Thirty years have I served the Philistines, and my neck is not subdued to the yoke. You don't know how wearisome it is to breathe the air of four pent walls without relief, day after day, all the golden hours of the day between ten and four, without ease or interposition. *Tædet me harum quotidianarum formarum*, these pestilential clerk-faces always in one's dish. Oh for a few years between the grave and the desk!—they are the same, save at the latter you are the outside machine. The foul enchanter* ——, ("letters four do form his name"—Busirane is his name in hell,) that has curtailed you of some domestic comforts, hath laid a heavier hand on me, not in present infliction, but in taking away the hope of enfranchisement. I dare not whisper to myself a pension on this side of absolute incapacitation and infirmity, till years have sucked me dry;—*Otium cum indignitate*. I had thought in a green old age (Oh † green thought!) to have retired to Ponder's End, (emblematic name, how beautiful!) in the Ware Road, there to have made up my accounts with heaven and the company, toddling about between it and Cheshunt; anon stretching, on some fine Izaak Walton morning, to Hoddesdon or Amwell, careless as a beggar; but walking, walking ever till I fairly walked myself off my legs, dying walking!

* Joseph Hume, M.P., who had attacked abuses in the East India Company (Lucas).

† Andrew Marvell's *The Garden*.

The hope is gone. I sit like Philomel all day (but not singing), with my breast against this thorn of a desk, with the only hope that some pulmonary affliction may relieve me. *Vide* Lord Palmerston's report of the clerks in the War Office, (Debates in this morning's *Times*,) by which it appears, in twenty years as many clerks have been coughed and catarrhed out of it into their freer graves. Thank you for asking about the pictures. Milton hangs over my fire-side in Covent Garden, (when I am there,) the rest have been sold for an old song, wanting the eloquent tongue that should have set them off! You have gratified me with liking my meeting with Dodd. For the Malvolio story—the thing is become in verity a sad task, and I eke it out with anything. If I could slip out of it I should be happy, but our chief-reputed assistants have forsaken us. The Opium-Eater crossed us once with a dazzling path, and hath as suddenly left us darkling; and, in short, I shall go on from dull to worse, because I cannot resist the booksellers' importunity—the old plea you know of authors, but I believe on my part sincere. Hartley I do not so often see: but I never see him in unwelcome hour. I thoroughly love and honour him. I send you a frozen epistle, but it is Winter and dead time of the year with me. May heaven keep something like Spring and Summer up with you, strengthen your eyes, and make mine a little lighter to encounter with them, as I hope they shall yet and again, before all are closed.

Yours, with every kind remembrance,

C. L.

[Æt. 47]

To Mr. and Mrs. Bruton

[THANKS FOR A PIG]

Twelfth Day, '23.

The pig was above my feeble praise. It was a dear pigmy. There was some contention as to who should have the ears; but, in spite of his obstinacy, (deaf as these little creatures are to advice,) I contrived to get at one of them.

It came in boots too, which I took as a favour. Generally these pretty toes, pretty toes! are missing; but I suppose he wore them to look taller.

He must have been the least of his race. His little foots would have gone into the silver slipper. I take him to have been a Chinese and a female.

If Evelyn could have seen him, he would never have farrowed two such prodigious volumes; seeing how much good can be contained in—how small a compass!

He crackled delicately.

I left a blank at the top of my letter, not being determined which to address it to: so farmer and farmer's wife will please to divide our thanks. May your granaries be full, and your rats empty, and your chickens plump, and your envious neighbours lean, and your labourers busy, and you as idle and as happy as the day is long!

> Vive l'Agriculture!
> How do you make your pigs so little?
> They are vastly engaging at the age:
> I was so myself.
> Now I am a disagreeable old hog,
> A middle-aged gentleman-and-a-half,
> My faculties (thank God!) are not much impaired.

I have my sight, hearing, taste, pretty perfect; and can read the Lord's Prayer in common type, by the help of a candle, without making many mistakes.

Believe me, that while my faculties last, I shall ever cherish a proper appreciation of your many kindnesses in this way, and that the last lingering relish of past favours upon my dying memory will be the smack of that little ear. It was the left ear, which is lucky. Many happy returns, not of the pig, but of the New Year, to both! Mary, for her share of the pig and the memoirs, desires to send the same.

Yours truly,
C. Lamb.

[Æt. 48]

To Miss Hutchinson

[mary lamb's handwriting]

[April 25, 1823.]

Dear Miss H.,—

Mary has such an invincible reluctance to any epistolary exertion, that I am sparing her a mortification by taking the pen from her. The plain truth is, she writes such a pimping, mean, detestable hand, that she is ashamed of the formation of her letters. There is an essential poverty and abjectness in the frame of them. They look like begging letters. And then she is sure to omit a most substantial word in the second draught (for she never ventures an epistle without a foul copy first,) which is obliged to be interlined; which spoils the neatest epistle, you know. Her figures, 1, 2, 3, 4, &c., where she has occasion to express numerals, as in the date, (25th April 1823,) are not figures, but figurantes; and the combined posse go staggering up and down shameless, as drunkards in the day-time. It is no better when she rules her paper. Her lines "are not less erring" than her words. A sort of unnatural parallel lines, that are perpetually threatening to meet; which, you know, is quite contrary to Euclid. Her very blots are not bold like this, [*here a large blot is inserted,*] but poor smears, half left in and half scratched out, with another smear left in their place. I like a clear letter; a bold free hand, and a fearless flourish. Then she has always to go through them (a second operation) to dot her *i*'s and cross her *t*'s. I don't think she can make a corkscrew if she tried, which has such a fine effect at the end or middle of an epistle, and fills up.

There is a corkscrew!—one of the best I ever drew. By the way, what incomparable whisky that was of Monkhouse's! But if I am to write a letter, let me begin, and not stand flourishing, like a fencer at a fair.

April 25th, 1823.

Dear Miss H.,—

It gives me great pleasure (the letter now begins) to hear that you got down so smoothly, and that Mrs. Monk-

house's spirits are so good and enterprising. It shows whatever her posture may be, that her mind at least is not supine. I hope the excursion will enable the former to keep pace with its outstripping neighbour. Pray present our kindest wishes to her and all; (that sentence should properly have come into the Postscript, but we airy mercurial spirits, there is no keeping us in.) "Time" (as was said of one of us*) "toils after us in vain." I am afraid our co-visit with Coleridge was a dream. I shall not get away before the end (or middle) of June, and then you will be frog-hopping at Boulogne; and besides, I think the Gilmans would scarce trust him with us; I have a malicious knack at cutting of apron-strings. The Saints' days you speak of have long since fled to heaven, with Astræa, and the cold piety of the age lacks fervour to recall them; only Peter left his key—the iron one of the two that "shuts amain"—and that is the reason I am locked up. Meanwhile of afternoons we pick up primroses at Dalston, and Mary corrects me when I call 'em cowslips. God bless you all; and pray remember me euphoniously to Mr. Gruvellegan. That Lee Priory must be a dainty bower. Is it built of flints?—and does it stand at Kingsgate?

[Æt. 49]

To Bernard Barton

[WILLIAM BLAKE; LORD BYRON]

[Postmark, May 15, 1824.]

Dear B. B.,—

I am oppressed with business all day and Company all night. But I will snatch a quarter of an hour. Your recent acquisitions of the Picture and the Letter are greatly to be congratulated. I too have a picture of my father and the copy of his first Love verses, but they have been mine long. Blake is a real name, I assure you, and a most extraordinary man, if he be still living. He is the Robert Blake,† whose wild designs accompany a

* Shakespeare. Dr. Johnson's *Prologue at the Opening of Drury Lane Theatre.*

† William Blake.

splendid folio edition of the "Night Thoughts," which you may have seen, in one of which he pictures the parting of soul and body by a solid mass of human form floating off God knows how from a lumpish mass (fac Simile to itself) left behind on the dying bed. He paints in water colours, marvellous strange pictures, visions of his brain which he asserts that he has seen. They have great merit. He has *seen* the old Welsh bards on Snowden—he has seen the Beautifullest, the Strongest, and the Ugliest Man, left alone from the Massacre of the Britons by the Romans, and has painted them from memory (I have seen his paintings) and asserts them to be as good as the figures of Raphael and Angelo, but not better, as they had precisely the same retro-visions and prophetic visions with [himself.] The painters in Oil (which he will have it that neither of them practised) he affirms to have been the ruin of art, and affirms that all the while he was engaged in his Water-paintings, Titian was disturbing him, Titian the Ill Genius of Oil Painting. His pictures, one in particular, the Canterbury Pilgrims (far above Stothard's) have great merit, but hard, dry, yet with grace. He has written a Catalogue of them, with a most spirited criticism on Chaucer, but mystical and full of Vision. His poems have been sold hitherto only in manuscript. I never read them, but a friend at my desire procured the Sweep Song. There is one to a Tiger, which I have heard recited, beginning

> "Tiger, Tiger, burning bright,
> Thro' the desarts of the night" *

which is glorious. But alas! I have not the Book, for the man is flown, whither I know not, to Hades, or a Mad House.—But I must look on him as one of the most extraordinary persons of the age. Montgomery's Book I have not much hope from. The Society, with the affected name, have been labouring at it for these twenty years, and made few converts. I think it was injudicious to mix stories avowedly colour'd by fiction with the sad true statements from the parliamentary records, &c., but

* "In the forests of the night."

I wish the little Negroes all the good that can come from it. I *b*atter'd my brains (not butter'd them—but it is a bad *a*) for a few verses for them, but I could make nothing of it. You have been luckier. But Blake's are the flower of the set you will, I am sure, agree, tho' some of Montgomery's at the end are pretty—but the Dream awkwardly paraphras'd from B.

With the exception of an Epilogue for a Private Theatrical, I have written nothing now for near six months. It is in vain to spur me on. I must wait. I cannot write without a genial impulse, and I have none. 'Tis barren all and dearth. No matter, life is something without scribbling. I have got rid of my bad spirits, and hold up pretty well this rain-damn'd May.

So we have lost another Poet. I never much relished his Lordship's mind, and shall be sorry if the Greeks have cause to miss him. He was to me offensive, and I never can make out his great *power,* which his admirers talk of. Why, a line of Wordsworth is a lever to lift the immortal spirit! Byron's can only move the Spleen. He was at best a Satyrist—in any other way he was mean enough. I daresay I do him injustice; but I cannot love him, nor squeeze a tear to his memory. He did not like the world, and he has left it, as Alderman Curtis advised the Radicals, "if they don't like their country, damn 'em, let 'em leave it"—they possessing no rood of Ground in England, and he ten thousand acres. Byron was better than many Curtises.

Farewell. Accept this Apology for a Letter from one who owes you so much in that kind.

Yours ever truly,
C. L.

B. Barton, Esq.,
Woodbridge, Suffolk.

[Æt. 50]

To William Wordsworth

[his release and pension]

Colebrook Cottage, 6th April, 1825.

Dear Wordsworth,—

I have been several times meditating a letter to you concerning the good thing which has befallen me, but the thought of poor Monkhouse came across me. He was one that I had exulted in the prospect of congratulating me. He and you were to have been the first participators, for indeed it has been ten weeks since the first motion of it. Here am I then, after thirty-three years' slavery, sitting in my own room at eleven o'clock this finest of all April mornings, a freed man, with £441 a year for the remainder of my life, live I as long as John Dennis, who outlived his annuity and starved at ninety: £441, *i.e.*, £450, with a deduction of £9 for a provision secured to my sister, she being survivor, the pension guaranteed by Act Georgii Tertii, &c.

I came home For Ever on Tuesday in last week. The incomprehensibleness of my condition overwhelmed me. It was like passing from life into eternity. Every year to be as long as three, *i.e.*, to have three times as much real time (time that is my own) in it! I wandered about thinking I was happy, but feeling I was not. But that tumultuousness is passing off, and I begin to understand the nature of the gift. Holydays, even the annual month, were always uneasy joys; their conscious fugitiveness; the craving after making the most of them. Now, when all is holyday, there are no holydays. I can sit at home, in rain or shine, without a restless impulse for walkings. I am daily steadying, and shall soon find it as natural to me to be my own master, as it has been irksome to have had a master. Mary wakes every morning with an obscure feeling that some good has happened to us.

Leigh Hunt and Montgomery, after their releasements, describe the shock of their emancipation much as I feel mine. But it hurt their frames. I eat, drink, and sleep as sound as ever. I lay no anxious schemes for going hither and thither, but take things as they occur. Yesterday I excursioned twenty miles; to-day I write

a few letters. Pleasuring was for fugitive play-days; mine are fugitive only in the sense that life is fugitive. Freedom and life coexistent!

At the foot of such a call upon you for gratulation, I am ashamed to advert to that melancholy event. Monkhouse was a character I learned to love slowly, but it grew upon me, yearly, monthly, daily. What a chasm has it made in our pleasant parties! His noble friendly face was always coming before me, till this hurrying event in my life came, and for the time has absorbed all interest; in fact it has shaken me a little. My old desk companions, with whom I have had such merry hours, seem to reproach me for removing my lot from among them. They were pleasant creatures; but to the anxieties of business, and a weight of possible worse ever impending, I was not equal. Tuthill and Gilman gave me my certificates. I laughed at the friendly lie implied in them; but my sister shook her head, and said it was all true. Indeed, this last Winter I was jaded out: Winters were always worse than other parts of the year, because the spirits are worse, and I had no daylight. In Summer I had day-light evenings. The relief was hinted to me from a superior power, when I, poor slave, had not a hope but that I must wait another seven years with Jacob: and lo! the Rachel which I coveted is brought to me!

Have you read the noble dedication of Irving's "Missionary Orations" to S. T. C.? Who shall call this man a quack hereafter? What the Kirk will think of it neither I nor Irving care. When somebody suggested to him that it would not be likely to do him good, videlicet, among his own people, "That is a reason for doing it," was his noble answer. That Irving thinks he has profited mainly by S. T. C., I have no doubt. The very style of the Dedication shows it.

Communicate my news to Southey, and beg his pardon for my being so long acknowledging his kind present of the "Church," which circumstances, having no reference to himself, prevented at the time. Assure him of my deep respect and friendliest feelings.

Divide the same, or rather each take the whole to you

—I mean you and all yours. To Miss Hutchinson I must write separate.

Farewell! and end at last, long selfish letter.

C. Lamb.

[Æt. 51]

To J. B. Dibdin

[dibdin's rainy sunday]

An answer is requested.

Saturday, September 9, 1826.

Dear D.,—

I have observed that a Letter is never more acceptable than when received upon a rainy day, especially a rainy Sunday; which moves me to send you somewhat, however short. This will find you sitting after Breakfast, which you will have prolonged as far as you can with consistency to the poor hand-maid that has the reversion of the Tea Leaves; making two nibbles of your last morsel of *stale* roll (you cannot have new ones on the Sabbath), and reluctantly coming to an end, because when that is done, what can you do till dinner? You cannot go to the Beach, for the rain is drowning the sea, turning rank Thetis fresh, taking the brine out of Neptune's pickles, while mermaids sit upon rocks with umbrellas, their ivory combs sheathed for spoiling in the wet of waters foreign to them. You cannot go to the library, for it's shut. You are not religious enough to go to church. O it's worth while to cultivate piety to the gods, to have something to fill up the heart on a wet Sunday! You cannot cast accounts, for your ledger is being eaten with moths in the Ancient Jewry. You cannot play at draughts, for there is none to play with you, and besides there is not a draught-board in the house. You cannot go to market, for it closed last night. You cannot look into the shops,—their backs are shut upon you. You cannot read the Bible, for it is not good reading for the sick and hypochondriacal. You cannot while away an hour with a friend, for you have no friend round that Wrekin. You cannot divert yourself with a stray acquaintance, for you have picked none up. You cannot bear the chiming of Bells, for they invite you to a banquet where

you are no visitant. You cannot cheer yourself with the prospect of to-morrow's letter, for none come on Mondays. You cannot count those endless vials on the mantelpiece with any hope of making a variation in their numbers. You have counted your spiders: your Bastile is exhausted. You sit and deliberately curse your hard exile from all familiar sights and sounds. Old Ranking poking in his head unexpectedly would just now be as good to you as Grimaldi. Anything to deliver you from this intolerable weight of Ennui. You are too ill to shake it off: not ill enough to submit to it, and to lie down as a lamb under it. The Tyranny of sickness is nothing to the Cruelty of Convalescence: 'tis to have Thirty Tyrants for one. That pattering rain drops on your brain. You'll be worse after dinner, for you must dine at one to-day, that Betty may go to afternoon service. She insists upon having her chopped hay. And then when she goes out, who *was* something to you, something to speak to—what an interminable afternoon you'll have to go thro'. You can't break yourself from your locality: you cannot say "to-morrow I set off for Banstead, by God": for you are booked for Wednesday. Foreseeing this, I thought a *cheerful letter* would come in opportunely. If any of the little topics for mirth I have thought upon should serve you in this utter extinguishment of sunshine, to make you a little merry, I shall have had my ends. I love to make things comfortable. . . . This, which is scratched out, was the most material thing I had to say, but on maturer thoughts I defer it.

P.S.—We are just sitting down to dinner with a pleasant party, Coleridge, Reynolds the dramatist, and Sam Bloxam: to-morrow (that is *to-day*), Liston, and Wyat of the Wells, dine with us. May this find you as jolly and freakish as we mean to be.

C. Lamb.

Addressed
T. Dibdin, Esq.,
No. 4, Meadow Cottages,
Hastings.

[Æt. 52]

To P. G. Patmore

[after a funeral]

Londres, Julie 19, 1827.

Dear P.,—

I am so poorly. I have been to a funeral, where I made a pun, to the consternation of the rest of the mourners. And we had wine. I can't describe to you the howl which the widow set up at proper intervals. Dash could, for it was not unlike what he makes.

The letter I sent you was one directed to the care of E. W——, India House, for Mrs. H. *Which* Mrs. H—— I don't yet know; but A—— has taken it to France on speculation. Really it is embarrassing. There is Mrs. present H., Mrs. late H., and Mrs. John H., and to which of the three Mrs. Wigginses it appertains, I know not. I wanted to open it, but 'tis transportation.

I am sorry you are plagued about your book. I would strongly recommend you to take for one story Massinger's *Old Law*. It is exquisite. I can think of no other.

Dash is frightful this morning. He whines and stands up on his hind legs. He misses Becky, who is gone to town. I took him to Barnet the other day, and he couldn't eat his vittles after it. Pray God his intellectuals be not slipping.

Mary is gone out for some soles. I suppose 'tis no use to ask you to come and partake of 'em; else there is a steam vessel.

I am doing a tragi-comedy in two acts, and have got on tolerably; but it will be refused, or worse. I never had luck with anything my name was put to.

O, I am so poorly! I *waked* it at my cousin's the bookbinder, who is now with God; or, if he is not, 'tis no fault of mine.

We hope the frank wines do not disagree with Mrs. P——. By the way, I like her.

Did you ever taste frogs? Get them if you can. They are like little Lilliput rabbits, only a thought nicer.

How sick I am!—not of the world, but of the widow's shrub. She's sworn under £6,000, but I think she per-

jured herself. She howls in E *la,* and I comfort her in B flat. You understand music?

If you hav'n't got Massinger, you have nothing to do but go to the first Bibliothèque you can light upon at Boulogne, and ask for it (Gifford's edition); and if they hav'n't got it you can have "Athalie" par Monsieur Racine, and make the best of it. But that *Old Law* is delicious.

"No shrimps!" (that's in answer to Mary's question about how the soles are to be done).

I am uncertain where this wandering letter may reach you. What you mean by Poste Restante, God knows. Do you mean I must pay the postage? So I do, to Dover.

We had a merry passage with the widow at the Commons. She was howling—part howling and part giving directions to the proctor—when crash! down went my sister through a crazy chair, and made the clerks grin, and I grinned, and the widow tittered, and then I knew that she was not inconsolable. Mary was more frightened than hurt.

She'd make a good match for any body (by she I mean the widow).

> "If he bring but a *relict* away,
> He is happy, nor heard to complain."
> Shenstone.

Proctor has got a wen growing out at the nape of his neck, which his wife wants him to have cut off; but I think it is rather an agreeable excrescence: like his poetry, redundant. Hone has hanged himself for debt. Godwin was taken up for picking pockets. Moxon has fallen in love with Emma, our nut-brown maid. Becky takes to bad courses. Her father was blown up in a steam machine. The coroner found it "insanity." I should not like him to sit on my letter.

Do you observe my direction. Is it Gallic-classical? Do try and get some frogs. You must ask for "grenouilles" (green eels). They don't understand "frogs," though 'tis a common phrase with us.

If you go through Bulloign (Boulogne), inquire if old Godfrey is living, and how he got home from the crusades. He must be a very old man.

If there is anything new in politics or literature in France, keep it till I see you again, for I'm in no hurry. Chatty Briant* is well, I hope.

I think I have no more news; only give both our loves (all three, says Dash,) to Mrs. P——, and bid her get quite well, as I am at present, bating qualms, and the grief incident to losing a valuable relation.

C. L.

[Æt. 54]

To William Wordsworth

[boarding in a village]

Enfield, Jan. 22nd, 1830.

And is it a year since we parted from you at the steps of Edmonton stage? There are not now the years that there used to be. The tale of the dwindled age of men, reported of successional mankind, is true of the same man only. We do not live a year in a year now. 'Tis a *punctum stans*. The seasons pass us with indifference. Spring cheers not, nor Winter heightens our gloom; Autumn hath foregone its moralities,—they are "hey-pass repass," as in a show-box. Yet, as far as last year occurs back,—for they scarce show a reflex now, they make no memory as heretofore,—'twas sufficiently gloomy. Let the sullen nothing pass. Suffice it, that after sad spirits, prolonged through many of its months, as it called them, we have cast our skins; have taken a farewell of the pompous, troublesome trifle, called house-keeping, and are settled down into poor boarders and lodgers at next door with an old couple, the Baucis and Baucida of dull Enfield. Here we have nothing to do with our victuals but to eat them; with the garden but to see it grow; with the tax-gatherer but to hear him knock; with the maid but to hear her scolded. Scot and lot, butcher, baker, are things unknown to us, save as spectators of the pageant. We are fed we know not how; quietists—confiding ravens. We have *otium pro dignitate*, a respectable insignificance. Yet in the self-condemned obliviousness, in the stagnation, some molesting yearnings of life, not

* Chateaubriand.

quite killed, rise, prompting me that there was a London, and that I was of that old Jerusalem. In dreams I am in Fleet Market, but I wake and cry to sleep again. I die hard, a stubborn Eloisa in this detestable Paraclete. What have I gained by health? Intolerable dulness. What by early hours and moderate meals? A total blank. O never let the lying poets be believed, who 'tice men from the cheerful haunts of streets, or think they mean it not of a country village. In the ruins of Palmyra I could gird myself up to solitude, or muse to the snorings of the Seven Sleepers; but to have a little teazing image of a town about one; country folks that do not look like country folks; shops two yards square, half-a-dozen apples, and two penn'orth of overlooked ginger-bread for the lofty fruiterers of Oxford Street; and, for the immortal book and print stalls, a circulating library that stands still, where the show-picture is a last year's Valentine, and whither the fame of the last ten Scotch novels has not yet travelled,—(marry, they just begin to be conscious of the *Redgauntlet*:*)—to have a new plastered flat church, and to be wishing that it was but a cathedral! The very blackguards here are degenerate; the topping gentry stock-brokers; the passengers too many to insure your quiet, or let you go about whistling or gaping, too few to be the fine indifferent pageants of Fleet Street. Confining, room-keeping, thickest Winter, is yet more bearable here than the gaudy months. Among one's books at one's fire by candle, one is soothed into an oblivion that one is not in the country; but with the light the green fields return, till I gaze, and in a calenture can plunge myself into St. Giles's. O let no native Londoner imagine that health, and rest, and innocent occupation, interchange of converse sweet, and recreative study, can make the country anything better than altogether odious and detestable! A garden was the primitive prison, till man, with Promethean felicity and boldness, luckily sinned himself out of it. Thence followed Babylon, Nineveh, Venice, London, haberdashers, goldsmiths, taverns, playhouses, satires, epigrams, puns,—these all came in on the town part, and the thither side of inno-

* Published in 1824.

cence. Man found out inventions. From my den I return you condolence for your decaying sight; not for anything there is to see in the country, but for the miss of the pleasure of reading a London newspaper. The poets are as well to listen to; any thing high may, nay must, be read out; you read it to yourself with an imaginary auditor; but the light paragraphs must be glid over by the proper eye; mouthing mumbles their gossamery substance. 'Tis these trifles I should mourn in fading sight. A newspaper is the single gleam of comfort I receive here; it comes from rich Cathay with tidings of mankind. Yet I could not attend to it, read out by the most beloved voice. But your eyes do not get worse, I gather. O for the collyrium of Tobias inclosed in a whiting's liver, to send you with no apocryphal good wishes! The last long time I heard from you, you had knocked your head against something. Do not do so; for your head (I do not flatter) is not a knob, or the top of a brass nail, or the end of a nine pin.—unless a Vulcanian hammer could fairly batter a "Recluse" out of it; then would I bid the smirched god knock and knock lustily, the two-handed skinker. Mary must squeeze out a line *propriâ manu,* but indeed her fingers have been incorrigibly nervous to letter writing for a long interval. 'Twill please you all to hear, that though I fret like a lion in a net, her present health and spirits are better than they have been for some time past. She is absolutely three years and a half younger, as I tell her, since we have adopted this boarding plan.

Our providers are an honest pair, Dame Westwood and her husband. He, when the light of prosperity shined on them, a moderately thriving haberdasher within Bow bells, retired since with something under a competence; writes himself parcel gentleman; hath borne parish offices; sings fine old sea songs at threescore and ten; sighs only now and then when he thinks that he has a son on his hands, about fifteen, whom he finds a difficulty in getting out into the world, and then checks a sigh with muttering, as I once heard him prettily, not meaning to be heard, "I have married my daughter, however"; takes the weather as it comes; outsides it to town in severest season; and o' winter nights tells old stories not tending

to literature, (how comfortable to author-rid folks!) and has *one anecdote*, upon which and about forty pounds a year he seems to have retired in green old age. It was how he was a rider in his youth, travelling for shops and once (not to balk his employer's bargain) on a sweltering day in August, rode foaming into Dunstable upon a mad horse, to the dismay and expostulatory wonderment of innkeepers, ostlers, &c., who declared they would not have bestrid the beast to win the Derby. Understand, the creature galled to death and desperation by gad-flies, cormorant-winged, worse than beset Inachus's daughter. This he tells, this he brindles and burnishes on a Winter's eve; 'tis his star of set glory, his rejuvenescence, to descant upon. Far from me be it (*dii avertant*) to look a gift story in the mouth, or cruelly to surmise (as those who doubt the plunge of Curtius) that the inseparate conjuncture of man and beast, the centaur-phenomenon that staggered all Dunstable, might have been the effect of unromantic necessity; that the horse-part carried the reasoning, willy nilly; that needs must when such a devil drove; that certain spiral configurations in the frame of Thomas Westwood unfriendly to alighting, made the alliance more forcible than voluntary. Let him enjoy his fame for me, nor let me hint a whisper that shall dismount Bellerophon. But in case he was an involuntary martyr, yet if in the fiery conflict he buckled the soul of a constant haberdasher to him, and adopted his flames, let accident and him share the glory. You would all like Thomas Westwood. How weak is painting to describe a man! Say that he stands four feet and a nail high by his own yard measure, which, like the sceptre of Agamemnon, shall never sprout again, still you have no adequate idea; nor when I tell you that his dear hump, which I have favoured in the picture, seems to me of the buffalo—indicative and repository of mild qualities, a budget of kindnesses—still you have not the man. Knew you old Norris of the Temple? sixty years ours and our fathers' friend? He was not more natural to us than this old W., the acquaintance of scarce more weeks. Under his roof now ought I to take my rest, but that backlooking ambition tells me I might yet be a Londoner! Well, if ever we do move, we have incumbrances the less

to impede us; all our furniture has faded under the auctioneer's hammer, going for nothing, like the tarnished frippery of the prodigal, and we have only a spoon or two left to bless us. Clothed we came into Enfield, and naked we must go out of it. I would live in London, shirtless, bookless. Henry Crabb is at Rome; advices to that effect have reached Bury. But by solemn legacy he bequeathed at parting (whether he should live or die) a turkey of Suffolk to be sent every succeeding Christmas to us and divers other friends. What a genuine old bachelor's action! I fear he will find the air of Italy too classic. His station is in the Harz forest; his soul is be-Goethed. Miss Kelly we never see; Talfourd not this half-year: the latter flourishes, but the exact number of his children (God forgive me!) I have utterly forgotten. We single people are often out in our count there. Shall I say two? We see scarce anybody. Can I cram loves enough to you all in this little O? Excuse particularizing.

C. L.

[Æt. 58]

To Mrs. Hazlitt

["A HALF-WAY PURGATORY"]

May 31st, 1833.

Dear Mrs. Hazlitt,—

I will assuredly come and find you out when I am better. I am driven from house to house by Mary's illness. I took a sudden resolution to take my sister to Edmonton, where she was under medical treatment last time, and have arranged to board and lodge with the people. Thank God, I have repudiated Enfield. I have got out of hell, despair of heaven, and must sit down contented in a half-way purgatory. Thus ends this strange eventful history. But I am nearer town, and will get up to you somehow before long.

I repent not of my resolution. 'Tis late, and my hand is unsteady; so good-bye till we meet,

Your old
C. L.

Mr. Walden's,
Church Street, Edmonton.
Mrs. Hazlitt, No. 4, Palace Street, Pimlico.

[Æt. 58]

To Edward Moxon
[emma isola's watch]

July 24th, 1833.

For God's sake give Emma no more watches; *one* has turned her head. She is arrogant and insulting. She said something very unpleasant to our old clock in the passage, as if he did not keep time, and yet he had made her no appointment. She takes it out every instant to look at the moment-hand. She lugs us out into the fields, because there the bird-boys ask you, "Pray, Sir, can you tell us what's o'clock?" and she answers them punctually. She loses all her time looking to see "what the time is." I overheard her whispering, "Just so many hours, minutes, &c., to Tuesday; I think St. George's goes too slow." This little present of Time!—why,—'tis Eternity to her!

What can make her so fond of a gingerbread watch?

She has spoiled some of the movements. Between ourselves, she has kissed away "half-past twelve," which I suppose to be the canonical hour in Hanover Square.

Well, if "love me love my watch" answers, she will keep time to you.

It goes right by the Horse Guards.

Dearest M.,—Never mind opposite nonsense. She does not love you for the watch, but the watch for you. I will be at the wedding, and keep the 30th July, as long as my poor months last me, as a festival, gloriously.

Yours ever,
Elia.

We have not heard from Cambridge. I will write the moment we do.

Edmonton, 24th July, twenty minutes past three by Emma's watch.

[Æt. 58]

To Mr. and Mrs. Moxon

[MARY LAMB AT THE WEDDING OF EMMA ISOLA]

August, 1833.

Dear Mr. and Mrs. Moxon,—

Time very short. I wrote to Miss Fryer, and had the sweetest letter about you, Emma, that ever friendship dictated. "I am full of good wishes, I am crying with good wishes," she says; but you shall see it.

Dear Moxon,—I take your writing most kindly, and shall most kindly your writing from Paris.

I want to crowd another letter to Miss Fryer into the little time after dinner, before post time. So with twenty thousand congratulations,

Yours,
C. L.

I am calm, sober, happy. Turn over for the reason. I got home from Dover Street, by Evans, *half as sober as a judge*. I am turning over a new leaf, as I hope you will now.

[The turn of the leaf presented the following from Mary Lamb:—]

My dear Emma and Edward Moxon,—

Accept my sincere congratulations, and imagine more good wishes than my weak nerves will let me put into good set words. The dreary blank of *unanswered questions* which I ventured to ask in vain was cleared up on the wedding day by Mrs. W. taking a glass of wine, and, with a total change of countenance, begging leave to drink Mr. and Mrs. Moxon's health. It restored me from that moment, as if by an electrical stroke, to the entire possession of my senses. I never felt so calm and quiet after a similar illness as I do now. I feel as if all tears were wiped from my eyes, and all care from my heart.

Mary Lamb.

Wednesday.

Dears again,—

Your letter interrupted a seventh game at picquet which *we* were having, after walking to Wright's and purchasing shoes. We pass our time in cards, walks, and reading. We attack Tasso soon.

C. L.

Never was such a calm, or such a recovery. 'Tis her own words undictated.

[Æt. 59]

To Miss Fryer

["BETTER THAN THE SENSE AND SANITY OF THIS WORLD"]

Feb. 14, 1834.

Dear Miss Fryer,—

Your letter found me just returned from keeping my birthday (pretty innocent!) at Dover Street. I see them pretty often. I have since had letters of business to write, or should have replied earlier. In one word, be less uneasy about me; I bear my privations very well; I am not in the depths of desolation, as heretofore. Your admonitions are not lost upon me. Your kindness has sunk into my heart. Have faith in me! It is no new thing for me to be left to my sister. When she is not violent, her rambling chat is better to me than the sense and sanity of this world. Her heart is obscured, not buried; it breaks out occasionally; and one can discern a strong mind struggling with the billows that have gone over it. I could be nowhere happier than under the same roof with her. Her memory is unnaturally strong; and from ages past, if we may so call the earliest records of our poor life, she fetches thousands of names and things that never would have dawned upon me again, and thousands from the ten years she lived before me. What took place from early girlhood to her coming of age, principally lives again (every important thing, and every trifle) in her brain, with the vividness of real presence. For twelve hours incessantly she will pour out without intermission all her past life, forgetting nothing, pouring out name

after name to the Waldens, as a dream; sense and nonsense; truths and errors huddled together; a medley between inspiration and possession. What things we are! I know you will bear with me, talking of these things. It seems to ease me, for I have nobody to tell these things to now. Emma, I see, has got a harp! and is learning to play. She has framed her three Walton pictures, and pretty they look. That is a book you should read: such sweet religion in it, next to Woolman's, though the subject be baits, and hooks, and worms, and fishes. She has my copy at present, to do two more from.

Very, very tired! I began this epistle, having been epistolizing all the morning, and very kindly would I end it, could I find adequate expressions to your kindness. We did set our minds on seeing you in Spring. One of us will indubitably. But I am not skilled in almanack learning to know when Spring precisely begins and ends. Pardon my blots; I am glad you like your book. I wish it had been half as worthy of your acceptance as John Woolman. But 'tis a good-natured book.

[Æt. 42]

MARY LAMB

1764–1847

To Mrs. Clarkson

[THE FAILURE OF MR. H——]

Tuesday, Decr. 23, 1806.

My dear Mrs. Clarkson,—

You are very kind to say you are out of humour with yourself for not writing before, but I beg you will never be so again. I know so well, and often feel so badly, how tiresome writing sometimes is, that I intreat you will never write but when you will feel yourself quite inclined. —I tried the morning after the failure of our little farce to write a line, but you know its ill success and how stoutly we meant to bear it, but I found myself utterly incapable of writing one connected sentence, so that was the philosophy I wished to boast of.

I do not love to throw the blame of the ill success of a piece upon the actors—it is a common trick with unsuccessful dramatists. The blame rested chiefly with

Charles, and yet should not be called blame, for it was mere ignorance of stage effect—and I am mistaken if he has not gained much useful knowledge, more than he would have learned from a constant attendance at the representations of other people's pieces, by seeing his own fail; he seems perfectly aware why, and from what cause it failed. He intends to write one more with all his dear bought experience in his head, and should that share the same fate, he will then turn his mind to some other pursuit.

I am happy to hear so good an account of your health; go on improving as fast as you can, that I may find you quite well. At Easter, or a few weeks after, I hope to spend a delightful holiday with you at Bury; if we come at Easter we cannot stay longer than one week; if we defer our journey, we can make a much longer visit, but at present I know not how it will be settled, for my brother sometimes threatens to pass his hollidays in town hunting over old plays at the Museum to extract passages for a work (a collection of poetry) Mr. Wordsworth intends to publish. However, I hope before that time arrives, he will be able to borrow the books of some good old collector of those hidden treasures, and thus they can be copied at home and much of Charles' labour and time saved. The Museum is only open during his office hours. I am much pleased with your friend Henry Robinson. He has been truly kind and friendly about the farce.

That disappointment is wearing out of our heads very fast. My brother means to keep at home very much this winter, and work very hard. When he is at work, he is always happier and in better health.

I am glad Miss Smith is with you, because Coleridge has told me she is the best good girl in the world.

I am pleased to hear again the name of your old neighbour Mr. Smith. I well remember him the first season of the School for Scandal; he was ("I being a young thing then") a prodigious favourite with me. I cannot for the life of me conceive of him as an old man. *O what actors there were then!* but as I said before, disappointed authors must not complain of actors—you shall see the piece when I can spare time to write a copy, or can spare the only one we have. No matter for the *brains* of your

good towns-people. Go amongst them as much as you can, I am sure company is a certain cure for your malady.

I am glad to hear of my friend Tom's improvement; never mind his learning, that will come in due time. Indeed I have reasons for wishing him a little backward in that respect, for I have a little book I mean to send him and the printer has been so long bringing it out I began to fear Tom would attain so much knowledge as to outgrow the use thereof, and Tom's approbation of my first production was one of the things I built upon. I suppose I may send a parcel by the Bury stage? That is a foolish question to ask, for no doubt I may.

I rejoice to hear Mr. Clarkson has begun his history of the Abolition—May we not expect to see him now in a few days?—how I wish he would bring you too.

We are to stay at home and work, as I forget it is Christmas, but we sincerely wish you a *merry* happy Christmas and many, many happy *healthy* new years.

Charles' kindest respects to you and Mr. Clarkson and young Tom and Miss Buck. Is she not at Bury? I remain your affectionate friend,

M. Lamb.

No news of Coleridge lately.

I shall rejoice to hear from you, whenever you feel writing quite pleasant to you. *Did you ever see such a queer scrawl as mine?*

[Æt. 53]

To Dorothy Wordsworth
[A new home]

1817.

My dear Miss Wordsworth,—

Your kind letter has given us very great pleasure; the sight of your hand-writing was a most welcome surprise to us. We have heard good tidings of you by all our friends who were so fortunate as to visit you this Summer, and rejoice to see it confirmed by yourself. You have quite the advantage, in volunteering a letter; there is no merit in replying to so welcome a stranger.

We have left the Temple. I think you will be sorry to hear this. I know I have never been so well satisfied with

thinking of you at Rydal Mount, as when I could connect the idea of you with your own Grasmere Cottage. Our rooms were dirty and out of repair, and the inconveniences of living in chambers became every year more irksome, and so, at last, we mustered up resolution enough to leave the good old place, that so long had sheltered us, and here we are, living at a brazier's shop, No. 20, in Russell Street, Covent Garden, a place all alive with noise and bustle; Drury Lane Theatre in sight from our front, and Covent Garden from our back windows. The hubbub of the carriages returning from the play does not annoy me in the least; strange that it does not, for it is quite tremendous. I quite enjoy looking out of the window, and listening to the calling up of the carriages, and the squabbles of the coachmen and linkboys. It is the oddest scene to look down upon; I am sure you would be amused with it. It is well I am in a cheerful place, or I should have many misgivings about leaving the Temple. I look forward with great pleasure to the prospect of seeing my good friend, Miss Hutchinson. I wish Rydal Mount, with all its inhabitants enclosed, were to be transplanted with her, and to remain stationary in the midst of Covent Garden.

I passed through the street lately where Mr. and Mrs. Wordsworth lodged; several fine new houses, which were then just rising out of the ground, are quite finished, and a noble entrance made that way into Portland Place. I am very sorry for Mr. De Quincey. What a blunder the poor man made when he took up his dwelling among the mountains! I long to see my friend Pypos. Coleridge is still at Little Hampton with Mrs. Gilman; he has been so ill as to be confined to his room almost the whole time he has been there.

Charles has had all his Hogarths bound in a book; they were sent home yesterday, and now that I have them altogether, and perceive the advantage of peeping close at them through my spectacles, I am reconciled to the loss of them hanging round the room, which has been a great mortification to me—in vain I tried to console myself with looking at our new chairs and carpets, for we have got new chairs, and carpets covering all over our two sitting-rooms; I missed my old friends and could not be

comforted—then I would resolve to learn to look out of the window, a habit I never could attain in my life, and I have given it up as a thing quite impracticable—yet when I was at Brighton, last Summer, the first week I never took my eyes off from the sea, not even to look in a book: I had not seen the sea for sixteen years. Mrs. Morgan, who was with us, kept her liking, and continued her seat in the window till the very last, while Charles and I played truants, and wandered among the hills, which we magnified into little mountains, and *almost as good as* Westmoreland scenery: certainly we made discoveries of many pleasant walks, which few of the Brighton visitors have ever dreamed of—for, like as is the case in the neighbourhood of London, after the first two or three miles we were sure to find ourselves in a perfect solitude. I hope we shall meet before the walking faculties of either of us fail; you say you can walk fifteen miles with ease; that is exactly my stint, and more fatigues me; four or five miles every third or fourth day, keeping very quiet between, was all Mrs. Morgan could accomplish.

God bless you and yours. Love to all and each one.

I am ever yours most affectionately, M. Lamb.

[Æt. 25]

THOMAS MOORE

1779–1852

To His Mother

[A visit to Niagara Falls]

Niagara, July 24, 1804.

My dearest Mother,—

I have seen the Falls, and am all rapture and amazement. I cannot give you a better idea of what I felt than by transcribing what I wrote off hastily in my journal on returning. "Arrived at Chippewa, within three miles of the Falls, on Saturday, July 21, to dinner. That evening walked towards the Falls, but got no farther than the rapids, which gave us a prelibation of the grandeur we had to expect. Next day, Sunday, July 22, went to visit the Falls. Never shall I forget the impression I felt at the first glimpse of them which we got as the carriage passed over the hill that overlooks them. We were

not near enough to be agitated by the terrific effects of the scene; but saw through the trees this mighty flow of waters descending with calm magnificence, and received enough of its grandeur to set imagination on the wing; imagination which, even at Niagara, can outrun reality. I felt as if approaching the very residence of the Deity; the tears started into my eyes; and I remained, for moments after we had lost sight of the scene, in that delicious absorption which pious enthusiasm alone can produce. We arrived at the New Ladder and descended to the bottom. Here all its awful sublimities rushed full upon me. But the former exquisite sensation was gone. I now saw all. The string that had been touched by the first impulse, and which *fancy* would have kept for ever in vibration, now rested at *reality*. Yet, though there was no more to imagine, there was much to feel. My whole heart and soul ascended towards the Divinity in a swell of devout admiration, which I never before experienced. Oh! bring the atheist here, and he cannot return an atheist! I pity the man who can coldly sit down to write a description of these ineffable wonders: much more do I pity him who can submit them to the admeasurement of gallons and yards. It is impossible by pen or pencil to convey even a faint idea of their magnificence. Painting is lifeless, and the most burning words of poetry have all been lavished upon inferior and ordinary subjects. We must have new combinations of language to describe the Fall of Niagara."

[Æt. 36]

To Samuel Rogers

[MOORE AT WORK ON "LALLA ROOKH"]

Mayfield: December 26, 1815.

My dear Rogers,—

As this is about the time you said you should be on your return to London, from your bright course through that noble zodiac you've been moving in, I hasten to welcome you thither, not alas! with my hand, as I could wish, —*that* joy must not be for a few months longer,—but with my warmest congratulations on your safe and sound

return from the Continent, and hearty thanks for your kind recollections of me—recollections which I never want the outward and visible sign of letter-writing to assure me of, however delightful and welcome it may be, in addition to *knowing* that there's sweet music in the instrument, to *hear* a little of its melody now and then. This image will not stand your criticism, but you know its *meaning,* and that's enough—much more indeed than we Irish image-makers can in general achieve. My desire to see you for *yourself alone,* is still more whetted by all I hear of the exquisite gleanings you have made on your tour. The Donegals say you have seen so much, seen everything so well, and describe it all so picturesquely, that there is nothing like the treat of hearing you talk of your travels—how I long for that treat! You are a happy fellow, my dear Rogers, I know no one more *nourri des fleurs* of life, no one who lives so much "apis matinæ more" as yourself. The great regret of my future days (and I hope the *greatest*) will be my loss of the opportunity of seeing that glorious gallery, which like those "domes of Shadukiam and Amberabad," that Nourmahal saw in the "gorgeous clouds of the west," is now dispersed and gone for ever. It is a loss that never can be remedied; but still perhaps our sacrifices are among our pleasantest recollections, and I ought not to feel sorry that the time and money, which would have procured for myself this great gratification, have been employed in making other hearts happy, better hearts than mine, and better happiness than *that* would have been. With respect to my *Peris,* thus stands the case, and remember that they are still to remain (where Peris best like to be) *under the rose.* I have nearly finished three tales, making, in all, about three thousand five hundred lines, but my plan is to have *five tales,* the stories of all which are arranged, and which I am *determined* to finish before I publish—no urgings nor wonderings nor tauntings shall induce me to lift the curtain till I have grouped these five subjects in the way I think best for variety and effect. I have already suffered enough by premature publication. I have formidable favourites to contend with, and must try to make up my deficiencies in *dash* and vigour by a greater degree, if possible, of versatility and polish. Now it will

take, at the least, six thousand lines to complete this plan, *i.e.*, between two and three thousand more than I have yet done. By May next I expect to have five thousand finished. This is the number for which the Longmans stipulated, and accordingly in May I mean to appear in London, and *nominally* deliver the work into their hands. It would be then too late (even if all were finished) to think of going to press; so that I shall thus enjoy the credit with the Literary Quidnuncs of having completed my task, together with the advantage of the whole summer before me to extend it to the length I purpose. Such is the statement of my thousands, &c., which I am afraid you will find as puzzling as a speech of Mr. Vansittart's; but it is now near twelve o'clock at night, which being an hour later than our cottage rules allow, I feel it impossible to be luminous any longer—in which tendency to eclipse, my candle sympathises most gloomily.

Your poor friend Psyche is by no means well. I was in hopes that our Irish trip would have benefited her; but her weakness and want of appetite continue most distressingly, and our cold habitation in the fields has now given her a violent cough, which if it does not soon get better, will alarm me exceedingly. I never love her so well as when she is ill, which is perhaps the best proof how *really* I love her. How do Byron and my Lady go on? there are strange rumours in the country about them.

Ever yours, my dear Rogers,

THOMAS MOORE.

[Æt. 34] WASHINGTON IRVING

1783–1859

To His Brother, Peter Irving

[A visit to sir walter scott]

ABBOTSFORD, September 1, 1817.

My dear Brother:

I have barely time to scrawl a line before the *gossoon* goes off with the letters to the neighboring post-office.

I was disappointed in my expectation of meeting with Dugald Stewart at Mr. Jeffrey's; some circumstance prevented his coming; though we had Mrs. and Miss Stew-

art. The party, however, was very agreeable and interesting. Lady Davy was in excellent spirits, and talked like an angel. In the evening, when we collected in the drawing-room, she held forth for upwards of an hour; the company drew round her and seemed to listen in mute pleasure; even Jeffrey seemed to keep his colloquial powers in check to give her full chance. She reminded me of the picture of the Minister Bird with all the birds of the forest perched on the surrounding branches in listening attitudes. I met there with Lord Webb Seymour, brother to the Duke of Somerset. He is almost a constant resident of Edinburgh. He was very attentive to me; wrote down a route for me in the Highlands, and called on me the next morning, when he detailed the route more particularly. I have promised to see him when I return to Edinburgh, which promise I shall keep, as I like him much.

On Friday, in spite of sullen, gloomy weather, I mounted the top of the mail coach, and rattled off to Selkirk. It rained heavily in the course of the afternoon, and drove me inside. On Saturday morning early I took chaise for Melrose; and on the way stopped at the gate of Abbotsford, and sent in my letter of introduction, with a request to know whether it would be agreeable for Mr. Scott to receive a visit from me in the course of the day. The glorious old minstrel himself came limping to the gate, took me by the hand in a way that made me feel as if we were old friends; in a moment I was seated at his hospitable board among his charming little family, and here have I been ever since. I had intended certainly being back to Edinburgh to-day (Monday), but Mr. Scott wishes me to stay until Wednesday, that we may make excursions to Dryburgh Abbey, Yarrow, &c., as the weather has held up and the sun begins to shine. I cannot tell you how truly I have enjoyed the hours I have passed here. They fly by too quick, yet each is loaded with story, incident, or song; and when I consider the world of ideas, images, and impressions that have been crowded upon my mind since I have been here, it seems incredible that I should only have been two days at Abbotsford. I have rambled about the hills with Scott; visited the haunts of Thomas the Rhymer, and other spots rendered

classic by border tale and witching song, and have been in a kind of dream or delirium.

As to Scott, I cannot express my delight at his character and manners. He is a sterling golden-hearted old worthy, full of the joyousness of youth, with an imagination continually furnishing forth picture, and a charming simplicity of manner that puts you at ease with him in a moment. It has been a constant source of pleasure to me to remark his deportment towards his family, his neighbors, his domestics, his very dogs and cats; everything that comes within his influence seems to catch a beam of that sunshine that plays round his heart; but I shall say more of him hereafter, for he is a theme on which I shall love to dwell.

Before I left Edinburgh I saw Blackwood in his shop. It was accidental—my conversing with him. He found out who I was; is extremely anxious to make an American arrangement; wishes to get me to write for his Magazine; (the "Edinburgh Monthly.") Wishes to introduce me to Mackenzie, Wilson, &c. Constable called on me just before I left town. He had been in the country and just returned. He was very friendly in his manner. Lord Webb Seymour's coming in interrupted us, and Constable took leave. I promised to see him on my return to Edinburgh. He is about regenerating the old "Edinburgh Magazine," and has got Blackwood's editors away from him in consequence of some feud they had with him. . . .

Commend me to Hamilton. I hope to hear from him soon, and shall write to him again.

Your affectionate brother,
W. I.

P. S.—This morning we ride to Dryburgh Abbey and see also the old Earl of Buchan—who, you know, is a queer one.

[Æt. 41]

To Thomas Moore

[kenney; rogers; lord byron's "life"]

Brighton, August 14, 1824.

My boat is on the shore
And my bark is on the sea;

I forget how the song ends, but here I am at Brighton just on the point of embarking for France. I have dragged myself out of London as a horse drags himself out of the slough or a fly out of a honey pot, almost leaving a limb behind him at every tug. Not that I have been immersed in pleasure and surrounded by sweets, but rather up to the ears in ink and harassed by printers' devils.

I never have had such fagging in altering, adding, and correcting; and I have been detained beyond all patience by the delays of the press. Yesterday I absolutely broke away, without waiting for the last sheets. They are to be sent after me here by mail to be corrected this morning, or else they must take their chance. From the time I first started pen in hand on this work,* it has been nothing but hard driving with me.

I have not been able to get to Tunbridge to see the Donegals, which I really and greatly regret. Indeed I have seen nobody except a friend or two, who had the kindness to hunt me out. Among these was Mr. Story, and I ate a dinner there that it took me a week to digest, having been obliged to swallow so much hard-favored nonsense from a loud-talking baronet whose name, thank God, I forget, but who maintained Byron was not a man of courage, and therefore his poetry was not readable. I was really afraid he would bring John Story to the same way of thinking.

I went a few evenings since to see Kenney's new piece, the Alcaid. It went off lamely, and the Alcaid is rather a bore, and comes near to be generally thought so. Poor Kenney came to my room next evening, and I could not have believed that one night could have ruined a man so completely. I swear to you I thought at first it was a flimsy suit of clothes had left some bedside and walked

* *Tales of a Traveller.*

into my room without waiting for the owner to get up; or that it was one of those frames on which clothiers stretch coats at their shop doors; until I perceived a thin face sticking edgeways out of the collar of the coat like the axe in a bundle of fasces. He was so thin, and pale, and nervous, and exhausted—he made a dozen difficulties in getting over a spot in the carpet, and never would have accomplished it if he had not lifted himself over by the points of his shirt collar.

I saw Rogers just as I was leaving town. He told me he had seen you, and that the christening was soon to take place.

I had not time to ask Rogers any particulars about you, and indeed he is not exactly the man from whom I would ask news about my friends. I dined *tête-à-tête* with him some time since, and he served up his friends as he served up his fish, with a squeeze of lemon over each. It was very piquant, but it rather set my teeth on edge.

I hope you are working at Lord Byron's life. Sheridan's can keep without disadvantage, but now is the time to work at Lord B. so as to bring it out before the interest shall have died away, or that others shall have usurped the public mind with respect to him.

I met Mrs. Brannegan one evening at the opera, and on parting inquired her address. I was too busy to call for a day or two, and made my call the very day she had departed.

Farewell, my dear Moore. Let me hear from you, if but a line; particularly if my work pleases you, but don't say a word against it. I am easily put out of humor with what I do. Give as much love to Mrs. Moore as it is respectable in a husband to countenance, and tell her I have ordered a copy of my work to be sent to her.

Yours ever,

WASHINGTON IRVING.

[Æt. 48]

To Mrs. Paris

[CHRISTMAS FESTIVITIES; NEWSTEAD ABBEY]

Newstead Abbey, Jan. 20, 1832.

My dear Sister:

Upwards of a month since I left London with Mr. Van Buren and his son, on a tour to show them some interesting places in the interior, and to give them an idea of English country life, and the festivities of an old-fashioned English Christmas. We posted in an open carriage, as the weather was uncommonly mild and beautiful for the season. Our first stopping place was Oxford, to visit the noble collegiate buildings; thence we went to Blenheim, and visited the seat of the Duke of Marlborough, one of the finest places in England. We next passed a night and part of the next day at Stratford-on-Avon, visiting the house where Shakespeare was born and the church where he lies buried. We were quartered at the little inn of the Red Horse, where I found the same obliging little landlady that kept it at the time of the visit recorded in the Sketch Book. You cannot imagine what a fuss the little woman made when she found out who I was. She showed me the room I had occupied, in which she had hung up my engraved likeness, and she produced a poker which was locked up in the archives of her house, on which she had caused to be engraved, "Geoffrey Crayon's Sceptre." From Stratford we went to Warwick Castle, Kenilworth, and then to Birmingham, where we passed a part of three days, dining at Van Wart's; continuing our tour we visited Lichfield and its beautiful cathedral, Derby, Nottingham, Newstead Abbey, Hardwick Castle, &c., &c., and finally arrived on Christmas eve at Barlborough Hall, where we had engaged to remain during the holidays. Here, then, we passed a fortnight, during which the old hall was a complete scene of old English hospitality. Many of the ancient games and customs, obsolete in other parts of England, are still maintained in that part of the country, and are encouraged by Mr. Rodes. We accordingly had mummers, and morris dancers, and glee singers from the neighboring villages; and great feasting, with the

boar's head crowned with holly; the wassail bowl, the yule clog, snap dragon, &c., &c. There was dancing by night in the grand tapestried apartments, and dancing in the servants' hall, and all kinds of merriment. The whole was to have wound up by a grand fancy ball on Twelfth Night to which all the gentry of the neighborhood were invited, when Mr. Rodes received news of the death of a relative, which put an end to the festivities. . . . .

After leaving the hospitable mansion of Mr. Rodes we came to Newstead Abbey on an invitation from Col. Wildman, the present proprietor. Mr. Van Buren and his son remained but a couple of days, but I was easily prevailed upon to prolong my visit, and have now been here about a fortnight; and never has time passed away more delightfully. I have found Col. Wildman a most estimable man, warm-hearted, generous, and amiable, and his wife charming both in character and person. The abbey I have already mentioned to you in a former letter as being the ancestral mansion of Lord Byron, and mentioned frequently in his writings. I occupy his room, and the very bed in which he slept. The edifice is a fine mixture of the convent and the palace, being an ancient abbey of friars granted by Henry VIII. to the Byron family. At one end is the ruin of the abbey church; the Gothic front still standing in fine preservation and overrun with ivy. My room immediately adjoins it, and hard by is a dark grove filled with rooks, who are continually wheeling and cawing about the building. What was once the interior of the church is now a grassy lawn with gravel walks, and where the high altar stood, is the monument erected by Lord Byron to his dog, in which he intended his own body should be deposited. The interior of the abbey is a complete labyrinth. There are the old monkish cloisters, dim and damp, surrounding a square, in the centre of which is a grotesque Gothic fountain. Then there are long corridors hung with portraits, and set out with figures in armor, that look like spectres. There are ancient state apartments that have been occupied by some of the British sovereigns in their progresses, and which still bear their names. These have been restored by Col. Wildman with great taste, and are hung with ancient tapestry, and quaintly furnished. There are large halls,

also, some splendidly restored, others undergoing repairs; with long vaulted chambers that have served for refectories and dormitories to the monks in old times. Behind the edifice is the ancient abbey garden, with great terraced walks, balustrades, fish ponds, formal flower plots, &c., all kept up in admirable style, and suiting the venerable appearance of the building. You may easily imagine the charms of such a residence connected with the poetical associations with the memory of Lord Byron. The solemn and monastic look of many parts of the edifice, also, has a most mysterious and romantic effect, and has given rise to many superstitious fables among the servants and the neighboring peasantry. They have a story of a friar in black who haunts the cloisters, and is said to have been seen by Lord Byron. He certainly alludes to him in his poems. Then there is a female in white, who appeared in the bedroom of a young lady, a cousin of Lord Byron, coming through the wall on one side of the room, and going into the wall on the other side. Besides these there is "Sir John Byron, the little, with the great beard," the first proprietor of the abbey, whose portrait in black hangs up in the drawing room. He has been seen by a young lady visitor, sitting by the fireplace of one of the state apartments reading out of a great book. I could mention other stories of the kind, but these are sufficient to show you that this old building is more than usually favored by ghosts. . . . .

Ever most affectionately your brother,

W. I.

[Æt. 60] THOMAS DE QUINCEY

1785–1859

To a Friend

[THE "HIDEOUS INCUBUS" UPON HIS MIND]

[1845?]

With respect to my book ["The Logic of Political Economy," which appeared in 1844], which perhaps by this time you and Professor Nichol will have received through the publishers, I have a word to say. Upon some of the distinctions there contended for it would be false humility if I should doubt they are sound. The sub-

stance, I am too well assured, is liable to no dispute. But as to the method of presenting the distinctions, as to the composition of the book, and the whole evolution of a course of thinking, there it is that I too deeply recognise the mind affected by my morbid condition. Through that ruin, and by help of that ruin, I looked into and read the latter states of Coleridge. His chaos I comprehended by the darkness of my own, and both were the work of laudanum. It is as if ivory carvings and elaborate fretwork and fair enamelling should be found with worms and ashes amongst coffins and the wrecks of some forgotten life or some abolished nature. In parts and fractions eternal creations are carried on, but the nexus is wanting, and life and the central principle which should bind together all the parts at the centre, with all its radiations to the circumference, are wanting. Infinite incoherence, ropes of sand, gloomy incapacity of vital pervasion by some one plastic principle, that is the hideous incubus upon my mind always. For there is no disorganised wreck so absolute, so perfect, as that which is wrought by misery.

Misery is a strong word; and I would not have molested your happiness by any such gloomy reference, were it not that I did really, and in solemn earnest, regard my condition in that same hopeless light as I did until lately. I had one sole glimmer of hope, and it was this—that laudanum might be the secret key to all this wretchedness, not utterable to any human ear, which for ever I endured. Upon this subject the following is my brief record. On leaving Glasgow in the first week of June, 1843, I was as for two years you had known me. Why I know not, but for some cause during the summer months the weight of insufferable misery and mere abhorrence of life increased; but also it fluctuated. A conviction fell upon me that immense exercise might restore me. But you will imagine my horror when, with that conviction, I found, precisely in my earliest efforts, my feet gave way, and the misery in all its strength came back. Every prospect I had of being laid up as a cripple for life. Much and deeply I pondered on this, and I gathered myself up as if for a final effort. For if that fate were established, farewell I felt for me to all hope of restoration.

Eternally the words sounded in my ears: "Suffered and was buried." Unless that one effort which I planned and determined, as often you see a prostrate horse "biding his time" and reserving his strength for one mighty struggle, too surely I believed that for me no ray of light would ever shine again. The danger was, that at first going off on exercise the inflammation should come on; that, if then I persisted, the inflammation would settle into the bones, and the case become desperate. It matters not to trouble you with the details—the result was this:—I took every precaution known to the surgical skill of the neighbourhood. Within a measured space of forty-four yards in circuit, so that forty rounds were exactly required for one mile, I had within ninety days walked a thousand miles. And so far I triumphed. But because still I was irregular as to laudanum, this also I reformed. For six months no result; one dreary uniformity of report — absolute desolation; misery so perfect that too surely I perceived, and no longer disguised from myself, the impossibility of continuing to live under so profound a blight. I now kept my journal as one who in a desert island is come to his last day's provisions. On Friday the 23d of February, I might say for the first time, in scriptural words, "And the man was sitting clothed and in his right mind." That is not too strong an expression. I had known all along, and too ominously interpreted the experience from the fact, that I was not in my perfect mind. Lunacy causes misery; the border is sometimes crossed, and too often that is the order of succession. But also misery, and above all physical misery, working by means of intellectual remembrances and persecution of thoughts, no doubt sometimes inversely causes lunacy. To that issue I felt that all things tended. You may guess, therefore, the awe that fell upon me, when, not by random accident, capable of no theory on review, but in consequence of one firm system pursued through eight months as to one element, and nearly three as to another, I recovered in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, such a rectification of the compass as I had not known for years. It is true that this frame departed from me within forty-eight hours; but that no way alarmed me—I drew hope from the omen. It is as if a man had been in a

whirlpool, carried violently by a headlong current, and before he could speak or think, he was riding as if at anchor, once more dull and untroubled, as in days of infancy. The current caught me again; and the old sufferings in degree came back, as I have said. There is something shocking and generally childish, by too obvious associations, in any suggestions of suicide; but too certainly I felt that to this my condition tended; for again enormous irritability was rapidly travelling over the disk of my life, and this, and the consciousness of increasing weakness, added to my desolation of heart. I felt that no man could continue to struggle. Coleridge had often spoken to me of the dying away from him of all hope; not meaning, as I rightly understood him, the hope that forms itself as a distant look out into the future, but of the gladsome vital feelings that are born of the blood, and make the goings-on of life pleasurable.

Then I partly understood him, now perfectly; and laying all things together, I returned obstinately to the belief that laudanum was at the root of all this unimaginable hell. Why then not, if only by way of experiment, leave it off? Alas! that had become impossible. Then I descended to a hundred drops. Effects so dreadful and utterly unconjectured by medical men succeeded that I was glad to get back under shelter. Not the less I persisted; silently, surely, descended the ladder, and, as I have said, suddenly found my mind as if whirled round on its true centre. A line of Wordsworth's about Germany I remembered:—

"All power was given her in the dreadful trance."

Such was my sense: illimitable seemed the powers restored to me; and now, having tried the key, and found it the true key, even though a blast of wind has blown the door to again, no jot of spirits was gone away from me: I shall arise as one risen from the dead.

This long story I have told you, because nothing short of this could explain my conduct, past, present, and future. And thus far there is an interest for all the world —that I am certain of this, viz., that misery is the talisman by which man communicates with the world outside of our fleshly world.

[Æt. 32] BENJAMIN ROBERT HAYDON

1786–1846

To John Keats

[recovering chapman's homer]

14th July, 1818. [?]

My dear Keats,

When I called the other morning I did not know your poems were out, or I should have read them before I came, in order to tell you my opinion. I have done so since, and really I cannot tell you how very highly I estimate them. They justify the assertions of all your friends regarding your poetical powers. I can assure you, whatever you may do, you will not exceed my opinion of them.

Have you done with Chapman's "Homer"? I want it very badly at this moment. Will you let the bearer have it, as well as let me know how you are?

I am, dear Keats, ever yours,

B. R. Haydon.

[Æt. 35]

To Miss Mitford

["poor dear keats!"]

21st April, 1821.

. . . . Keats was a victim to personal abuse and want of nerve to bear it. Ought he to have sunk in that way because a few quizzers told him that he was an apothecary's apprentice? A genius more purely poetical never existed! In conversation he was nothing, or if anything, weak and inconsistent; he had an exquisite sense of humour, but it was in the fields Keats was in his glory. . . . . His ruin was owing to his want of decision of character and power of will, without which genius is a curse. He could not bring his mind to bear on one object, and was at the mercy of every pretty theory Leigh Hunt's ingenuity would suggest. . . . He had a tending to religion when first I knew him, but Leigh Hunt soon forced it from his mind. Never shall I forget Keats once rising from his chair and approaching my last picture ("Entry into Jerusalem"); he went before the por-

trait of Voltaire, placed his hand on his heart and bowing low

> ". . . . In reverence done, as to the power
> That dwelt within, whose presence had infused
> Into the plant sciential sap, derived
> From nectar, drink of gods,"

as Milton says of Eve after she had eaten the apple. "That's the being to whom I bend," said he, alluding to the bending of the other figures in the picture, and contrasting Voltaire with our Saviour, and his own adoration to that of the crowd. Leigh Hunt was the great unhinger of his best dispositions. Latterly, Keats saw Leigh Hunt's weakness. I distrusted his leader, but Keats would not cease to visit him because he thought Hunt illused. This showed Keats's goodness of heart.

He began life full of hope, and his brother told me that he recounted with pride and delight the opinion we had expressed of his powers the first morning he had breakfasted with me. Fiery, impetuous, ungovernable, and undecided, he expected the world to bow at once to his talents as his friends had done, and he had not patience to bear the natural irritation of envy at the undoubted proof he gave of strength. Goaded by ridicule, he distrusted himself, and flew to dissipation. For six weeks he was hardly ever sober, and to show you what a man of genius does when his passions are roused, he told me that he once covered his tongue and throat, as far as he could reach, with cayenne pepper in order to enjoy the "delicious coolness of claret in all its glory." This was his own expression.

The death of his brother wounded him deeply, and it appeared to me from that hour he began to droop. He wrote his exquisite "Ode to the Nightingale" at this time, and as we were one evening walking in the Kilburn meadows he repeated it to me, before he put it to paper, in a low, tremulous under-tone which affected me extremely. He had great enthusiasm for me and so had I for him, but he grew angry latterly because I shook my head at his proceedings. I told him, I begged of him to bend his genius to some definite object. I remonstrated on

his absurd dissipation, but to no purpose. The last time I saw him was at Hampstead, lying on his back in a white bed, helpless, irritable, and hectic. He had a book, and enraged at his own feebleness, seemed as if he were going out of the world with a contempt for this, and no hopes of a better. He muttered as I stood by him that if he did not recover he would "cut his throat." I tried to calm him, but to no purpose. I left him in great depression of spirit to see him in such a state. Poor dear Keats!

[Æt. 37]

To Miss Mitford

[A robin]

7th November, 1823.

. . . The other day, while Frank was lying on his bed in the nursery, a little robin hopped in. I caught it, caged it, and after a day or two it began to "dit! dit!" This note seized hold of the boy's imagination; and last night when, like a good old papa, I got out in the dark to give him something to drink, the instant he felt my rough hand, which he knew was not his mother's, after he had satisfied his thirst, he pressed his cheek against my hand—half-asleep as he was—and in a small treble voice, like a flageolet, said "Dittey!" with a sort of sparkling chuckle. Is he not a darling? It was so cheerful, in the midst of a dark night, when most children would have cried, that, I privately tell you—at which you must not laugh—I *hugged him* well.

[Æt. 39]

To Miss Mitford

[Coleridge; a sarcophagus; sir john soane]

28th March, 1825.

. . . I was at Soane's last night to see this sarcophagus by lamp-light. The first person I met, after seventeen years, was Coleridge, silver-haired! He looked at my bald front, and I at his hair, with mutual looks of sympathy and mutual headshaking. It affected me very

much, and so it seemed to affect him. I did not know what to say, nor did he; and then in his chanting way, half-poetical, half-inspired, half-idiotic, he began to console me by trying to prove that the only way for a man of genius to be happy was just to put forth no more power than was sufficient for the purposes of the age in which he lived, as if genius was a power one could fold up like a parasol! At this moment over came Spurzheim, with his German simplicity, and shaking my hand: "How doe you doe? Vy, your organs are more parfaite den eāver. How luckee you lose your hair. Veel you pearmeet me to eintrowdooze you to Mrs. Spurzheim?" I was pushed against Turner, the landscape painter, with his red face and white waistcoat, and before I could see Mrs. Spurzheim, was carried off my legs, and irretrievably bustled to where the sarcophagus lay.

Soane's house is a perfect Cretan labyrinth: curious narrow staircases, landing places, balconies, spring doors, and little rooms filled with fragments to the very ceiling. It was the finest fun imaginable to see the people come into the library after wandering about below, amidst tombs and capitals, and shafts, and noiseless heads, with a sort of expression of delighted relief at finding themselves again among the living, and with coffee and cake! They looked as if they were pleased to feel their blood circulate once more, and went smirking up to Soane, "lui faisant leurs compliments," with a twisting chuckle of features as if grateful for their escape. Fancy delicate ladies of fashion dipping their pretty heads into an old mouldy, fusty, hieroglyphicked coffin, blessing their stars at its age, wondering whom it contained, and whispering that it was mentioned in Pliny. You can imagine the associations connected with such contrasts. Just as I was beginning to meditate, the Duke of Sussex, with a star on his breast, and an asthma inside it, came squeezing and wheezing along the narrow passage, driving all the women before him like a Blue-Beard, and putting his royal head into the coffin, added his wonder to the wonder of the rest. Upstairs stood Soane, spare, thin, caustic, and starched, "mocking the thing he laughed at," as he smiled approbation for the praises bestowed on his magnificent house. . . . Coleridge said, "I have a great

contempt for these Egyptians with all their learning. After all, what did it amount to, but a bad system of astronomy?" "What do *you* think of this house, Mr. Haydon?" said that dandy, ——, to me. "Very interesting," I said. "Very interesting," he replied, with a sparkle in his eye denoting an occult meaning he was too polite to express. "Very curious, is it not?" "Very curious," I echoed. "Very kind of Mr. Soane to open the house so." "Very kind," I replied, as grave as the Chancellor, seeing that he was dying to say something which would come out if I pretended ignorance. "Rather odd, though, stuck about so." I smiled. "However, it *is* very kind of Soane, you know, but it's a funny house, and a——" Just then, Soane was elbowed against him, and both making elegant bows to each other,—expressed his thanks to Soane for "admitting him to the enjoyment of such a splendid treat," &c., &c.,—and he went off with Soane downstairs, talking of the Egyptians with all the solemnity of deep learning and of a profound interest in his subject.

As I looked at Soane, smiling and flushed by flattery, I thought of Johnson at Ranelagh. "There was not a soul then around him who would not, ere they put on their night-caps, envy him his assemblage of rank, and talent, and fashion; sneer at his antiques, quiz his coffee, and go to sleep, pitying with affected superiority his delusion and vanity." But Soane is a good though caustic man. . . . And now I must go and paint the carpet my sitter stands on; so adieu to human nature, and let me paint with all my power the colour and the texture of a Brussels bit.

Ever sincerely yours,
B. R. Haydon.

[Æt. 40]

To Miss Mitford

[an appreciative butcher]

18th August, 1826.

How do you find yourself? I heard you were poorly. What are you about? I was happy to hear of ——'s safe arrival again, and I shall be most happy to see him, though tell him he will find no more "Solomons" tower-

ing up as a background to our conversations. Nothing but genteel-sized drawing-room pocket-history—Alexander in a nutshell; Bucephalus no bigger than a Shetland pony, and my little girl's doll a giantess to my Olympias!

The other night I paid my butcher; one of the miracles of these times, you will say. Let me tell you I have all my life been seeking for a butcher whose respect for genius predominated over his love of gain. I could not make out, before I dealt with this man, his excessive desire that I should be his customer; his sly hints as I passed his shop that he had "a bit of South Down, very fine; a sweetbread, perfection; and a calf's foot that was all jelly without bone!" The other day he called, and I had him sent up into the painting-room. I found him in great admiration of "Alexander." "Quite alive, Sir!" "I am glad you think so," said I. "Yes, Sir; but, as I have said often to my sister, you could not have painted that picture, Sir, if you had not eat my meat, Sir!" "Very true, Mr. Sowerby." "Ah! Sir, I have a fancy for *genus,* Sir!" "Have you, Mr. Sowerby?" "Yes, Sir; Mrs. Siddons, Sir, has eat my meat, Sir; never was *such a woman for chops, Sir!*"—and he drew up his beefy, shiny face, clean shaved, with a clean blue cravat under his chin, a clean jacket, a clean apron, and a pair of hands that would pin an ox to the earth if he was obstreperous—"Ah! Sir, she was a wonderful crayture!" "She was, Mr. Sowerby." "Ah! Sir, when she used to act that there character, you see (but Lord, such a head! as I say to my sister)—that there woman, Sir, that murders a king between 'em!" "Oh! Lady Macbeth." "Ah, Sir, that's it—Lady Macbeth—I used to get up with the butler behind her carriage when she acted, and, as I used to see her looking quite wild, and all the people quite frightened, 'Ah, ha! my lady,' says I, 'if it wasn't for my meat, though, you wouldn't be able to do *that!*'" "Mr. Sowerby, you seem to be a man of feeling; will you take a glass of wine?" After a bow or two, down he sat, and by degrees his heart opened. "You see, Sir, I have fed Mrs. Siddons, Sir; John Kemble, Sir; Charles Kemble, Sir; Stephen Kemble, Sir; and Madame Catalani, Sir; Morland the painter, and, I beg your pardon, Sir, and *you,* Sir." "Mr. Sowerby, you do me honour." "Madame

Catalani, Sir, was a wonderful woman for sweetbreads; but the Kemble family, Sir, the gentlemen, Sir, rumpsteaks and kidneys in general was their taste; but Mrs. Siddons, Sir, she liked chops, Sir, as much as you do, Sir," &c., &c. I soon perceived that the man's ambition was to feed genius. I shall recommend you to him; but is he not a capital fellow? But a little acting with his remarks would make you roar with laughter. Think of Lady Macbeth eating chops! Is not this a peep behind the curtain? I remember Wilkie saying that at a public dinner he was looking out for some celebrated man, when at last he caught a glimpse for the first time of a man whose books he had read with care for years, picking the leg of a roast goose, perfectly abstracted!

. . . Never will I bring up my boys to any profession that is not a matter of necessary want to the world. Painting, unless considered as it ought to be, is a mere matter of ornament and luxury. It is not yet taken up as it should be in a wealthy country like England, and all those who devote themselves to the higher branches of Art must suffer the penalty, as I have done and am doing.

So I was told, and to no purpose. I opposed my father, my mother, and my friends, though I am duly gratified by my fame in observant corners. Last week a bookstall keeper showed me one of my own books at his stall, and, by way of recommending it, pointed out a sketch of my own on the fly-leaf, "Which," said he, "I suppose is by Haydon himself. Ah! Sir, he was badly used—a disgrace to our great men." "But he was imprudent," said I. "Imprudent!" said he. "Yes, of course; he depended on their taste and generosity too much." "Have you any more of his books?" said I. "Oh! I had a great many; but I have sold them all, Sir, but this, and another that I will never part with."

[Æt. 42]

To Miss Mitford

[EXPERIENCES AT STRATFORD-ON-AVON]

31st August, 1828.

I have been longing to write to you since I made a pilgrimage to Stratford. Shakespeare may or may not

have been born in the room shown; but his father can be proved to have bought the house in 1574, ten years after. It may therefore be justly inferred, in the absence of proof that he lived anywhere else in the interval, that he lived here, and that his son was born here ten years before he made his purchase; and as people, except on singular emergencies, are generally born upstairs, Shakespeare may have given his first puling cry in the long, low old room still pointed out. But at his grave all doubt vanishes. You stand on the tombstone with the inscription he himself wrote while living; you read his pathetic entreaty and blessing on the reader who revered his remains, and curses on him who dared to touch; you see his bust put up by his daughter; you hear the very breezing of the trees he himself heard, and listen to the humming watery ripple of the river he must often have enjoyed. The most poetical imagination could not have conceived a burial-place more English, more Shakespearian. As I stood and looked up at the unaffected bust, which bears evidence in the exquisite smile when seen in profile of being authentic, and thought I was standing where Shakespeare had often been, I was deeply touched. The church alone, from the seclusion of situation, with the trees, the river, the tombs, was enough to make one poetical; but add to this, that the remains of Shakespeare, prostrate and silent, were lying near me, in a grave he had himself selected, in a church where he had often prayed, and with an epitaph he had himself written while living, it was impossible to say where on the face of the earth could an Englishman be more affected, or feel deeper or more touching sensations. I would not have bartered my associations at this unaffected, sequestered tomb of Stratford for all the classical delights of the Troad, the Acropolis, or Marathon. The old clerk, seeing me abstracted, opened the door that led to the churchyard close to the river, and left me to myself. I walked out, and lounging down to the Avon looked back on the church. The sun was setting behind me, and a golden light and shadow glittered on the glazed Gothic windows; and as the trees waved tenderly backwards and forwards, what dazzled your eyes one moment was obscured by the foliage the next, and a burnished splendour

and embrowned shadow kept shifting lazily. I was so close that the steeple towered up against the sky like the mast of some mighty vessel you pass under at sea. I stood and drank in all that an enthusiastic human being could feel, all that the most ardent and devoted lover of a great genius could have a sensation of, and all that river, tree, or sunset could excite in addition. I was quite lost; and returned to my inn disgusted at the thoughts of food and waiters, and would willingly, if my Creator had so pleased, have taken my flight to a purer being of "calm pleasures or majestic pains." When I got to bed I could not sleep. I tumbled about, fancied the pillow hard, the bed badly made, the sheets damp, and then I sat up and punched the pillow as I have seen chambermaids do; but it was all to no purpose; and at daybreak I got up in a heat of eagerness and restless fidget to get to Charlecote. I put the whole house in an uproar; got an early breakfast, and started off for the Lucys' place as fast as my legs would carry me. My walking is no joke, as you know, and this morning I would have defied Barclay. I met a sturdy gipsy, and after I had passed him, remembered that I might as well ask the way to Charlecote. "Right across the corn-field, Sir, and it will bring you to the back-way." I darted into the pathway, and coming to a swinging gate, pushed it open, and in a moment was inside an ancient park. Trees—full, tall, gigantic and umbrageous—announced the growth, indeed, of centuries. As I strolled along I caught a glimpse of the old red-bricked house, and going close to the river side came at once to two enormous willows branching aslant the stream, such as Ophelia hung to. Every blade of grass, every daisy and cowslip, every hedge and peeping flower, every tuft of tawny earth, every rustling and enormous tree casting its cool gigantic shadow on the sunny park, while the sheep dotted about on the glittering green where the sun streaked in, announced where Shakespeare imbibed his early deep and native taste for landscape scenery and forest solitude. They spoke to me as if Shakespeare was whispering in my ear. They looked as if his name was stamped by nature on their flowers and leaves in glittering dewdrops, or gorgeous colour.

I wondered I had seen no deer, when looking into the shades I saw a lineal descendant, may be, of the very buck Shakespeare shot, and was tried for shooting, lounging on his speckled haunches, and staring at me; and then up jumped a beautiful doe, which I had not seen, and sprang off as if her feet were feathers. The house was now full in sight, and crossing a narrow, old, fantastic and broken bridge, I came by the back-way to the entrance of the garden. Here sat a lady with a parroquet, and a gardener cutting the grass; so fearing I had intruded, I turned back again to the private entrance, and sent in my compliments that I was from London, and begged permission to see the house. Leave was granted directly. The housekeeper, a pleasant woman, said, "Here is the hall where Sir Thomas tried Shakespeare." This is evidently the way the family pride alludes to the fact, and I dare say servants and all think Shakespeare a dissolute fellow who "ought to have been transported." I am convinced the hall is nearly the same as when Shakespeare was tried in it.

I like Malone's exquisite *moral* feeling! He proves there was no park; but might not deer be enclosed? Deer-stealing was thought no more of in those days than apple-stealing in these; and if he did not steal deer, why should Shakespeare give the Lucy family under Shallow? And in the "Winter's Tale" say, "I would there were no age between ten and three and twenty, or that youth should sleep out the rest, for there is nothing in the between but . . . wronging the ancientry, stealing, fighting!" His works allude to the point sufficiently to make me suspect, and tradition renders it most probable. Admirers of a genius must have him a true beau ideal, like the Apollo; and like the Apollo, without a single natural detail to excite our sympathies.

As I returned home, I could not help feeling how short a road is when in pursuit of an object, and how long and tedious when the object is gained. It began to rain with vigour, so disdaining the beaten path I dashed over a hedge on a voyage of discovery. At one time I came close to the river stretching along like a mirror, reflecting earth and sky, and at another plumped upon a nest of cottages embosomed in trees, with rosy, scrambling,

dirty children, squatting on broken steps. I pushed on through flood and mud, and long wet grass and beaten-down barley, and at last got close to Stratford Bridge. At a humble cottage was the sign of "The Plough and Harrow," and "capital ale" posted up. So, wet and muddy, I walked in, and found a pure specimen of a country alehouse. It was quite a house of Shakespeare's time, everything neat and characteristic. Smoking on a back bench was a country-looking farmer's man. I dried myself at the fire, and ordered some ale, and a pint for my smoking companion. "Well," said I, "did you ever hear of Shakespeare?" "Heer of un, ah!" (puff! came out a volley of smoke) "'ee warn't borrn in Henley Street tho' a'!" "Where then?" said I. "By the waathur," said he. "Who told you that?" I asked. "Why, Jahn Cooper." "Jahn Cooper," shrieked the landlady, "why, what dus 'ee knaw aboot it?" "Nonsense," said the barmaid sharply. My pot companion gave a furious smoke at thus being floored at the beginning of his attempt to put forth a new theory for my benefit, looked at me very gravely, and prepared to overwhelm me at once. He puffed away, and after taking a sip he said, "Ah zur! there's another wonderful feller!" "Who?" said I. "Why," said he, "Jahn Cooper, I tell 'ee." Restraining myself with a strong effort, I said, "And what has he done?" "Dun," said he, sitting back and smacking his knee, "dun!" in a voice of thunder, "why, zur, I'll tell 'ee;" and laying down his pipe, and looking right into my eyes under his old weather-beaten, embrowned hat, he leaned forward, "I'll tell 'ee; 'ee's lived 'ere in this yeer town for ninety yeer as man and boy, and 'ee's never had the toothache, and neever last wan!" I saw the exquisite beauty of this in an instant. He then took up his pipe, letting the smoke ooze from the sides of his mouth, instead of puffing it out horizontally, till it ascended in curls of conscious victory to the ceiling of the apartment, while he leaned back his head and crossed his legs with an air of superior intelligence as if this conversation must now conclude. We were no longer on a level.

[Æt. 54]

To His Wife

[THE TIPSY UNDERGRADUATE]

Oxford, 2nd March, 1840.

. . . Last evening I dined *en famille* with the warden of New College, and spent a very cheerful evening. His eldest daughter has a genius for humorous sketches, and showed me two in particular that made me die with laughing; one was that of an undergraduate, who, very tipsy one night, walked into the warden's kitchen instead of his own rooms, and could not be persuaded of his mistake. The servants therefore locked him in, and called the warden, who went down and tried to persuade the young gentleman to go to his own rooms, but to no purpose. The attitude of this drunken young scamp, standing on his heels and resting against the kitchen dresser, with his cap and tassel over his nose and his eyes, doggedly looking into space between the warden's legs, while the warden stood in front, finger up, was perfectly irresistible. I laughed over it until the tears came into my eyes. It was so true to life. She is a real genius, but of course will never develop her genius, because she will not have to work for a living.

I have learned more of Oxford these last few days than I ever knew before. The undergraduates abuse the Fellows, the Fellows abuse the warden, and the warden complains of both. . . .

[Æt. 26] LORD BYRON

1788–1824

To Thomas Moore

[engagement to miss milbanke]

Newstead Abbey, Sept. 20, 1814.

Here's to her who long
Hath waked the poet's sigh!
The girl who gave to song
What gold could never buy.

My dear Moore,—

I am going to be married—that is, I am accepted, and one usually hopes the rest will follow. My mother of the Gracchi (that *are* to be), *you* think too strait-laced for me, although the paragon of only children, and invested with "golden opinions of all sorts of men," and full of "most blest conditions" as Desdemona herself. Miss Milbanke is the lady, and I have her father's invitation to proceed there in my elect capacity,—which, however, I cannot do till I have settled some business in London, and got a blue coat.

She is said to be an heiress, but of that I really know nothing certainly, and shall not enquire. But I do know that she has talents and excellent qualities; and you will not deny her judgment, after having refused six suitors and taken me.

Now, if you have anything to say against this, pray do; my mind's made up, positively fixed, determined, and therefore I will listen to reason, because now it can do no harm. Things may occur to break it off, but I will hope not. In the mean time, I tell you (a *secret*, by the by,—at least, till I know she wishes it to be public) that I have proposed and am accepted. You need not be in a hurry to wish me joy, for one mayn't be married for months. I am going to town to-morrow: but expect to be here, on my way there, within a fortnight.

If this had not happened, I should have gone to Italy. In my way down, perhaps, you will meet me at Nottingham, and come over with me here. I need not say that nothing will give me greater pleasure. I must, of course,

reform thoroughly; and, seriously, if I can contribute to her happiness, I shall secure my own. She is so good a person, that—that—in short, I wish I was a better.

Ever, etc.

[Æt. 31]

To John Murray

["out of sorts, out of nerves"]

Bologna, August 24, 1819.

Dear Sir,—

I wrote to you by last post, enclosing a buffooning letter for publication, addressed to the buffoon Roberts, who has thought proper to tie a canister to his own tail. It was written off hand, and in the midst of circumstances not very favourable to facetiousness, so that there may, perhaps, be more bitterness than enough for that sort of small acid punch. You will tell me.

Keep the *anonymous,* in every case: it helps what fun there may be; but if the matter grows serious about *Don Juan,* and you feel *yourself* in a scrape, or *me* either, *own that I am the author. I* will never *shrink;* and if *you* do, I can always answer you in the question of Guatimozin to his minister—each being on his own coals.

I wish that I had been in better spirits, but I am out of sorts, out of nerves; and now and then (I begin to fear) out of my senses. All this Italy has done for me, and not England: I defy all of you, and your climate to boot, to make me mad. But if ever I do really become a Bedlamite, and wear a strait waistcoat, let me be brought back among you; your people will then be proper company.

I assure you what I here say and feel has nothing to do with England, either in a literary or personal point of view. All my present pleasures or plagues are as Italian as the Opera. And after all, they are but trifles, for all this arises from my *dama's* being in the country for three days (at Capofiume); but as I could never live for but one human being at a time, (and, I assure you, *that one* has never been *myself,* as you may know by the consequences, for the *Selfish* are *successful* in life,) I feel alone and unhappy.

I have sent for my daughter from Venice, and I ride daily, and walk in a Garden, under a purple canopy of grapes, and sit by a fountain, and talk with the Gardener of his toils, which seem greater than Adam's, and with his wife, and with his Son's wife, who is the youngest of the party, and, I think, talks best of the three. Then I revisit the Campo Santo, and my old friend, the Sexton, has two—but *one* the prettiest daughter imaginable; and I amuse myself with contrasting her beautiful and innocent face of fifteen with the skulls with which he has peopled several cells, and particularly with that of one skull dated 1766, which was once covered (the tradition goes,) by the most lovely features of Bologna—noble and rich. When I look at these, and at this girl—when I think of what *they were,* and what *she* must be—why, then, my dear Murray, I won't shock you by saying what I think. It is little matter what becomes of us "bearded men," but I don't like the notion of a beautiful woman's lasting less than a beautiful tree—than her own picture—her own shadow, which won't change so to the Sun as her face to the mirror. I must leave off, for my head aches consumedly: I have never been quite well since the night of the representation of Alfieri's *Mirra,* a fortnight ago.

Yours ever,
B.

[Æt. 32]

To John Murray

[ANECDOTES OF CHARLES SKINNER MATTHEWS]

Ravenna, 9bre 19, 1820.

Dear Murray,—

What you said of the late Charles Skinner Matthews has set me to my recollections; but I have not been able to turn up anything which would do for the purposed Memoir of his brother,—even if he had previously done enough during his life to sanction the introduction of anecdotes so merely personal. He was, however, a very extraordinary man, and would have been a great one. No one ever succeeded in a more surpassing degree than he did as far as he went. He was indolent, too; but whenever he stripped, he overthrew all antagonists. His con-

quests will be found registered at Cambridge, particularly his *Downing* one, which was hotly and highly contested, and yet easily *won*. Hobhouse was his most intimate friend, and can tell you more of him than any man. William Bankes also a great deal. I myself recollect more of his oddities than of his academical qualities, for we lived most together at a very idle period of *my* life. When I went up to Trinity, in 1805, at the age of seventeen and a half, I was miserable and untoward to a degree. I was wretched at leaving Harrow, to which I had become attached during the two last years of my stay there; wretched at going to Cambridge instead of Oxford (there were no rooms vacant at Christchurch); wretched from some private domestic circumstances of different kinds, and consequently about as unsocial as a wolf taken from the troop. So that, although I knew Matthews, and met him often *then* at Bankes's, (who was my collegiate pastor, and master, and patron,) and at Rhode's, Milnes's, Price's, Dick's, Macnamara's, Farrell's, Gally Knight's, and others of that *set* of contemporaries, yet I was neither intimate with him, nor with any one else, except my old schoolfellow Edward Long (with whom I used to pass the day in riding and swimming), and William Bankes, who was good-naturedly tolerant of my ferocities.

It was not till 1807, after I had been upwards of a year away from Cambridge, to which I had returned again to *reside* for my degree, that I became one of Matthews's familiars, by means of Hobhouse, who, after hating me for two years, because I wore a *white hat*, and a *grey* coat, and rode a *grey* horse (as he says himself), took me into his good graces because I had written some poetry. I had always lived a good deal, and got drunk occasionally, in their company—but now we became really friends in a morning. Matthews, however, was not at this period resident in College. I met *him* chiefly in London, and at uncertain periods at Cambridge. Hobhouse, in the mean time, did great things: he founded the Cambridge "Whig Club" (which he seems to have forgotten), and the "Amicable Society," which was dissolved in consequence of the members constantly quarrelling, and made himself very popular with "us youth," and no less for-

midable to all tutors, professors, and heads of Colleges. William Bankes was gone; while he stayed, he ruled the roast—or rather the *roasting*—and was father of all mischiefs.

Matthews and I, meeting in London and elsewhere, became great cronies. He was not good tempered—nor am I—but with a little tact his temper was manageable, and I thought him so superior a man, that I was willing to sacrifice something to his humours, which were often, at the same time, amusing and provoking. What became of his *papers* (and he certainly had many), at the time of his death, was never known. I mention this by the way, fearing to skip it over, and *as* he *wrote* remarkably well, both in Latin and English. We went down to Newstead together, where I had got a famous cellar, and *Monks'* dresses from a masquerade warehouse. We were a company of seven or eight, with an occasional neighbour or so for visitors, and used to sit up late in our friars' dresses, drinking burgundy, claret, and champagne, and what not, out of the *skull-cup*, and all sorts of glasses, and buffooning all round the house, in our conventual garments. Matthews always denominated me "the Abbot," and never called me by any other name in his good humours, to the day of his death. The harmony of these our symposia was somewhat interrupted, a few days after our assembling, by Matthews's threatening to throw Hobhouse out of a *window*, in consequence of I know not what commerce of jokes ending in this epigram. Hobhouse came to me and said, that "his respect and regard for me as host would not permit him to call out any of my guests, and that he should go to town next morning." He did. It was in vain that I represented to him that the window was not high, and that the turf under it was particularly soft. Away he went.

Matthews and myself had travelled down from London together, talking all the way incessantly upon one single topic. When we got to Loughborough, I know not what chasm had made us diverge for a moment to some other subject, at which he was indignant. "Come," said he, "don't let us break through—let us go on as we began, to our journey's end"; and so he continued, and was as entertaining as ever to the very end. He had previously

occupied, during my year's absence from Cambridge, my rooms in Trinity, with the furniture; and Jones, the tutor, in his odd way, had said, on putting him in, "Mr. Matthews, I recommend to your attention not to damage any of the moveables, for Lord Byron, Sir, is a young man of *tumultuous passions.*" Matthews was delighted with this; and whenever anybody came to visit him, begged them to handle the very door with caution; and used to repeat Jones's admonition in his tone and manner. There was a large mirror in the room, on which he remarked, "that he thought his friends were grown uncommonly assiduous in coming to *see him*, but he soon discovered that they only came to *see themselves.*" Jones's phrase of *"tumultuous passions,"* and the whole scene, had put him into such good humour, that I verily believe that I owed to it a portion of his good graces.

When at Newstead, somebody by accident rubbed against one of his white silk stockings, one day before dinner; of course the gentleman apologised. "Sir," answered Matthews, "it may be all very well for you, who have a great many silk stockings, to dirty other people's; but to me, who have only this *one pair*, which I have put on in honour of the Abbot here, no apology can compensate for such carelessness; besides, the expense of washing." He had the same sort of droll sardonic way about everything. A wild Irishman, named Farrell, one evening began to say something at a large supper at Cambridge; Matthews roared out "Silence!" and then, pointing to Farrell, cried out in the words of the oracle, *"Orson is endowed with reason."* You may easily suppose that Orson lost what reason he had acquired, on hearing this compliment. When Hobhouse published his volume of poems, the *Miscellany* (which Matthews *would* call the *"Miss-sell-any"*), all that could be drawn from him was, that the preface was "extremely like *Walsh.*" Hobhouse thought this at first a compliment; but we never could make out what it was, for all we know of *Walsh* is his Ode to King William, and Pope's epithet of *"knowing Walsh."* When the Newstead party broke up for London, Hobhouse and Matthews, who were the greatest friends possible, agreed, for a whim, to *walk together* to town. They quarrelled by the way, and actually walked the

latter half of the journey, occasionally passing and repassing, without speaking. When Matthews had got to Highgate, he had spent all his money but three-pence halfpenny, and determined to spend that also in a pint of beer, which I believe he was drinking before a public-house, as Hobhouse passed him (still without speaking) for the last time on their route. They were reconciled in London again.

One of Matthews's passions was "the fancy"; and he sparred uncommonly well. But he always got beaten in rows, or combats with the bare fist. In swimming, too, he swam well; but with *effort* and *labour,* and *too high* out of the water; so that Scrope Davies and myself, of whom he was therein somewhat emulous, always told him that he would be drowned if ever he came to a difficult pass in the water. He was so; but surely Scrope and myself would have been most heartily glad that

> "the Dean had lived,
> And our prediction proved a lie."

His head was uncommonly handsome, very like what *Pope's* was in his youth.

His voice, and laugh, and features, are strongly resembled by his brother Henry's, if Henry be *he* of *King's College.* His passion for boxing was so great, that he actually wanted me to match him with Dogherty (whom I had backed and made the match for against Tom Belcher), and I saw them spar together at my own lodgings with the gloves on. As he was bent upon it, I would have backed Dogherty to please him, but the match went off. It was of course to have been a private fight, in a private room.

On one occasion, being too late to go home and dress, he was equipped by a friend (Mr. Baillie, I believe,) in a magnificently fashionable and somewhat exaggerated shirt and neckcloth. He proceeded to the Opera, and took his station in Fop's Alley. During the interval between the opera and the ballet, an acquaintance took his station by him and saluted him: "Come round," said Matthews, "come round."—"Why should I come round?" said the other; "you have only to turn your head—I am

close by you."—"That is exactly what I cannot do," said Matthews; "don't you see the state I am in?" pointing to his buckram shirt collar and inflexible cravat,—and there he stood with his head always in the same perpendicular position during the whole spectacle.

One evening, after dining together, as we were going to the Opera, I happened to have a spare Opera ticket (as subscriber to a box), and presented it to Matthews. "Now, sir," said he to Hobhouse afterwards, "this I call *courteous* in the Abbot—another man would never have thought that I might do better with half a guinea than throw it to a door-keeper;—but here is a man not only asks me to dinner, but gives me a ticket for the theatre." These were only his oddities, for no man was more liberal, or more honourable in all his doings and dealings, than Matthews. He gave Hobhouse and me, before we set out for Constantinople, a most splendid entertainment, to which we did ample justice. One of his fancies was dining at all sorts of out-of-the-way places. Somebody popped upon him in I know not what coffee-house in the Strand—and what do you think was the attraction? Why, that he paid a shilling (I think) to *dine with his hat on.* This he called his *"hat* house," and used to boast of the comfort of being covered at meal times.

When Sir Henry Smith was expelled from Cambridge for a row with a tradesman named "Hiron," Matthews solaced himself with shouting under Hiron's windows every evening,

> "Ah me! what perils do environ
> The man who meddles with *hot Hiron.*"

He was also of that band of profane scoffers who, under the auspices of . . . , used to rouse Lort Mansel (late Bishop of Bristol) from his slumbers in the lodge of Trinity; and when he appeared at the window foaming with wrath, and crying out, "I know you, gentlemen, I know you!" were wont to reply, "We beseech thee to hear us, good *Lort!*—Good *Lort,* deliver us!" (Lort was his Christian name). As he was very free in his speculations upon all kinds of subjects, although by no means either dissolute or intemperate in his conduct, and as I was no

less independent, our conversation and correspondence used to alarm our friend Hobhouse to a considerable degree.

You must be almost tired of my packets, which will have cost a mint of postage.

Salute Gifford and all my friends.

Yours,
B.

[Æt. 32]

To Thomas Moore

[an assassination]

Ravenna, Dec. 9, 1820.

I open my letter to tell you a fact, which will show the state of this country better than I can. The commandant of the troops is *now* lying *dead* in my house. He was shot at a little past eight o'clock, about two hundred paces from my door. I was putting on my great-coat to visit Madame la Contessa G. when I heard the shot. On coming into the hall, I found all my servants on the balcony, exclaiming that a man was murdered. I immediately ran down, calling on Tita (the bravest of them) to follow me. The rest wanted to hinder us from going, as it is the custom for every body here, it seems, to run away from "the stricken deer."

However, down we ran, and found him lying on his back, almost, if not quite, dead, with five wounds; one in the heart, two in the stomach, one in the finger, and the other in the arm. Some soldiers cocked their guns, and wanted to hinder me from passing. However, we passed, and I found Diego, the adjutant, crying over him like a child—a surgeon, who said nothing of his profession—a priest, sobbing a frightened prayer—and the commandant, all this time, on his back, on the hard, cold pavement, without light or assistance, or anything around him but confusion and dismay.

As nobody could, or would, do anything but howl and pray and as no one would stir a finger to move him, for fear of consequences, I lost my patience—made my servant and a couple of the mob take up the body—sent off two soldiers to the guard—despatched Diego to the Cardinal with the news, and had the commandant carried

upstairs into my own quarter. But it was too late, he was gone—not at all disfigured—bled inwardly—not above an ounce or two came out.

I had him partly stripped—made the surgeon examine him, and examined him myself. He had been shot by cut balls or slugs. I felt one of the slugs, which had gone through him, all but the skin. Everybody conjectures why he was killed, but no one knows how. The gun was found close by him—an old gun, half filed down.

He only said, *O Dio!* and *Gesu!* two or three times, and appeared to have suffered very little. Poor fellow! he was a brave officer, but had made himself much disliked by the people. I knew him personally, and had met with him often at conversazioni and elsewhere. My house is full of soldiers, dragoons, doctors, priests, and all kinds of persons,—though I have now cleared it, and clapt sentinels at the doors. To-morrow the body is to be moved. The town is in the greatest confusion, as you may suppose.

You are to know that, if I had not had the body moved, they would have left him there till morning in the street, for fear of consequences. I would not choose to let even a dog die in such a manner, without succour:—and, as for consequences, I care for none in a duty.

Yours, etc.

P.S.—The lieutenant on duty by the body is smoking his pipe with great composure.—A queer people this.

[Æt. 34]

To Thomas Moore

[BURNING SHELLEY'S BODY; "DON JUAN"]

Pisa, August 27, 1822.

It is boring to trouble you with "such small gear;" but it must be owned that I should be glad if you would enquire whether my Irish subscription ever reached the committee in Paris from Leghorn. My reasons, like Vellum's, "are threefold:"—First, I doubt the accuracy of all almoners, or remitters of benevolent cash; second, I do suspect that the said Committee, having in part served its time to time-serving may have kept back the acknowl-

edgment of an obnoxious politician's name in their lists; and third, I feel pretty sure that I shall one day be twitted by the government scribes for having been a professor of love for Ireland, and not coming forward with the others in her distresses.

It is not as you may opine, that I am ambitious of having my name in the papers, as I can have that any day in the week gratis. All I want is to know if the Reverend Thomas Hall did or did not remit my subscription (200 scudi of Tuscany, or about a thousand francs, more or less,) to the Committee at Paris.

The other day at Viareggio, I thought proper to swim off to my schooner (the Bolivar) in the offing, and thence to shore again—about three miles, or better, in all. As it was at mid-day, under a broiling sun, the consequence has beeen a feverish attack, and my whole skin's coming off, after going through the process of one large continuous blister, raised by the sun and sea together. I have suffered much pain; not being able to lie on my back, or even side; for my shoulders and arms were equally St. Bartholomewed. But it is over,—and I have got a new skin, and am as glossy as a snake in its new suit.

We have been burning the bodies of Shelley and Williams on the seashore, to render them fit for removal and regular interment. You can have no idea what an extraordinary effect such a funeral pile has, on a desolate shore, with mountains in the back-ground and the sea before, and the singular appearance the salt and frankincense gave to the flame. All of Shelley was consumed, except his *heart*, which would not take the flame, and is now preserved in spirits of wine.

Your old acquaintance Londonderry has quietly died at North Cray! and the virtuous De Witt was torn in pieces by the populace! What a lucky —— the Irishman has been in his life and end. In him your Irish Franklin *est mort!*

Leigh Hunt is sweating articles for his new Journal; and both he and I think it somewhat shabby in *you* not to contribute. Will you become one of the *properrioters?* "Do, and we go snacks." I recommend you to think twice before you respond in the negative.

I have nearly (*quite three*) four new cantos of *Don*

Juan ready. I obtained permission from the female Censor Morum of *my* morals to continue it, provided it were immaculate; so I have been as decent as need be. There is a deal of war—a siege, and all that, in the style, graphical and technical, of the shipwreck in Canto Second, which "took," as they say in the Row.

Yours, etc.

P.S.—That . . . Galignani has about ten lies in one paragraph. It was not a Bible that was found in Shelley's pocket, but John Keats's poems. However, it would not have been strange, for he was a great admirer of Scripture as a composition. *I* did not send my bust to the academy of New York; but I sat for my picture to young West, an American artist, at the request of some members of that Academy to *him* that he would take my portrait,—for the Academy, I believe.

I had, and still have, thoughts of South America, but am fluctuating between it and Greece. I should have gone, long ago, to one of them, but for my liaison with the Countess G.; for love, in these days, is little compatible with glory. *She* would be delighted to go too; but I do not choose to expose her to a long voyage, and a residence in an unsettled country, where I shall probably take a part of some sort.

[Æt. 47] RICHARD HARRIS BARHAM

1788–1845

To Master Edward Barham (Ætat. 8)

[A gift of books]

August 17, 1836.

My dear little Ned,
As I fear you have read
All the books that you have, from great A down to Z,
And your Aunt, too, has said
That you're very well bred,
And don't scream and yell fit to waken the dead,
I think that instead
Of that vile gingerbread

With which little boys, I know, like to be fed
(Though, lying like lead
On the stomach, the head
Gets affected, of which most mammas have a dread),
I shall rather be led
Before you to spread
These two little volumes, one blue and one red.
As three shillings have fled
From my pocket, dear Ned,
Don't dog's-ear nor dirt them, nor read them in bed!
Your affectionate father,
R. H. B.

[Æt. 19] PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY
1792–1822

To Elizabeth Hitchener
[thomas jefferson hogg]
Keswick, Chestnut Hill, Cumberland,
[Thursday, 14 November, 1811].

My dearest Friend,—

Probably my letters have not left Keswick sufficiently long for your answer; I have more to tell you, however, which relates to this terrible affair.

The day we left him, he wrote several letters to me,—the first evidently in the frenzy of his disappointment (for I had not told him the *time* of our departure). "I *will* have Harriet's forgiveness, or blow my brains out at her feet." The others, being written in moments of tranquillity, appeased immediate alarm on that score. You are already surprised, shocked: I can conceive it. Oh, it is terrible! this stroke has almost withered my being! Were it not for that dear friend whose happiness I so much prize, which at some future period I may perhaps constitute,—did I not live for an end, and aim, sanctified, hallowed,—I *might* have slept in peace. Yet no—not quite that: I might have been a colonist of Bedlam.

Stay: I promised to relate the circumstances. I will proceed historically.

I had observed that Harriet's behaviour to my friend had been greatly altered: I saw she regarded him with prejudice and hatred. I saw it with great pain, and re-

marked it to her. Her dark hints of his unworthiness alarmed me, yet alarmed me vaguely; for, believe me, this alarm was untainted with the slightest suspicion of his disloyalty to virtue and friendship. Conceive my horror when, on pressing the conversation, the secret of his unfaithfulness was divulged! I sought him, and we walked to the fields beyond York. I desired to know fully the account of this affair. I heard it *from him,* and I believe he was sincere. All I can recollect of that terrible day was that I pardoned him—freely, fully pardoned him; that I would still be a friend to him, and hoped soon to convince him how lovely virtue was; that his crime, not himself, was the object of my detestation; that I value a human being not for what it has been, but for what it is; that I hoped the time would come when he would regard this horrible error with as much disgust as I did. He said little: he was pale, terror-struck, remorseful.

This character is *not* his own: it sits ill upon him,—it will not long be his. His account was this. He came to Edinburgh. He saw me; he saw Harriet. He loved her (I use the word because he used it. You comprehend the different ideas it excites under different modes of application). He loved her. This passion, so far from meeting with resistance, was encouraged,—purposely encouraged, from motives which then appeared to him not wrong. On our arrival at York, he avowed it. Harriet forbade other mention; yet forbore to tell me, hoping she might hear no more of it. On my departure from York to Sussex (when you saw me), he urged the same suit,—urged it with arguments of detestable sophistry. "There is no injury to him who knows it not:—why is it wrong to permit my love, if it does not alienate affection?" These failed of success. At last, Harriet talked to him much of its immorality: and (though I fear her arguments were such as *could not* be logically superior to his) he confessed to her his conviction of having acted wrong, and, as some expiation, proposed instantly to inform *me* by letter of the whole. This Harriet refused to permit, fearing its effect upon my mind at such a distance: she could not know *when* I should return home. I returned the very next day.

This, as near as I recollect, was the substance of what cool consideration can extract from his account. The circumstances are true: Harriet's account coincides.

I have since written to him—frequently, and at great length. His letters are exculpatory: you shall see them.—Adieu at present to the subject.

No, my dearest friend, I will never cease to write to you. I never can cease to think of you.

Happiness, fleeting creation of circumstances, where art thou? I read your letter with delight; but this delight is even mixed with melancholy. And you! Tell me that you too are unhappy,—the cup of my misfortunes is then completed to the dregs. Yet did you not say that we should stimulate each other to virtue? Shall I be the first to fail? No! This listless torpor of regret will never do—it never shall possess me. Behold me then reassuming myself, deserving your esteem,—you, my second self!

Harriet has laughed at your suppositions. She invites you to our habitation wherever we are: she does this sincerely, and bids me send her love to you.

Eliza, her sister, is with us. She is, I think, a woman rather superior to the generality. She is prejudiced; but her prejudices I do not consider unvanquishable. Indeed, I have already conquered some of them.

The scenery here is awfully beautiful. Our window commands a view of two lakes, and the giant mountains which confine them. But the object most interesting to my feelings is Southey's habitation. He is now on a journey: when he returns, I shall call on him.

Adieu, dearest friend.

Ever yours, with true devotement and love,

PERCY SHELLEY.

[Æt. 26]

TO THOMAS LOVE PEACOCK

[LORD BYRON; ROME]

NAPLES, December 22, 1818.

My dear Peacock,—

I have received a letter from you here, dated November 1st; you see the reciprocation of letters from the term of our travels is more slow. I entirely agree with what

you say about Childe Harold. The spirit in which it is written is, if insane, the most wicked and mischievous insanity that ever was given forth. It is a kind of obstinate and self-willed folly, in which he hardens himself. I remonstrated with him in vain on the tone of mind from which such a view of things alone arises. For its real root is very different from its apparent one. Nothing can be less sublime than the true source of these expressions of contempt and desperation. The fact is, that first, the Italian women with whom he associates are perhaps the most contemptible of all who exist under the moon—the most ignorant, the most disgusting, the most bigoted; countesses smell so strongly of garlic, that an ordinary Englishman cannot approach them. Well, L. B. is familiar with the lowest sort of these women, the people his gondolieri pick up in the streets. He associates with wretches who seem almost to have lost the gait and physiognomy of man, and who do not scruple to avow practices, which are not only not named, but I believe seldom even conceived in England. He says he disapproves, but he endures. He is heartily and deeply discontented with himself; and contemplating in the distorted mirror of his own thoughts the nature and the destiny of man, what can he behold but objects of contempt and despair? But that he is a great poet, I think the address to Ocean proves. And he has a certain degree of candour while you talk to him, but unfortunately it does not outlast your departure. No, I do not doubt, and for his sake, I ought to hope, that his present career must end soon in some violent circumstance.

Since I last wrote to you, I have seen the ruins of Rome, the Vatican, St. Peter's, and all the miracles of ancient and modern art contained in that majestic city. The impression of it exceeds anything I have ever experienced in my travels. We stayed there only a week, intending to return at the end of February, and devote two or three months to its mines of inexhaustible contemplation, to which period I refer you for a minute account of it. We visited the Forum and the ruins of the Coliseum every day. The Coliseum is unlike any work of human hands I ever saw before. It is of enormous height and circuit, and the arches built of massy stones

are piled on one another, and jut into the blue air, shattered into the forms of overhanging rocks. It has been changed by time into the image of an amphitheatre of rocky hills overgrown by the wild olive, the myrtle, and the fig-tree, and threaded by little paths, which wind among its ruined stairs and immeasurable galleries; the copse-wood overshadows you as you wander through its labyrinths, and the wild weeds of this climate of flowers bloom under your feet. The arena is covered with grass, and pierces, like the skirts of a natural plain, the chasms of the broken arches around. But a small part of the exterior circumference remains—it is exquisitely light and beautiful; and the effect of the perfection of its architecture, adorned with ranges of Corinthian pilasters, supporting a bold cornice, is such, as to diminish the effect of its greatness. The interior is all ruin. I can scarcely believe that when encrusted with Dorian marble and ornamented by columns of Egyptian granite, its effect could have been so sublime and so impressive as in its present state. It is open to the sky, and it was the clear and sunny weather of the end of November in this climate when we visited it, day after day. . . .

I have told you little about Rome; but I reserve the Pantheon, and St. Peter's, and the Vatican, and Raphael, for my return. About a fortnight ago I left Rome, and Mary and Claire followed in three days, for it was necessary to procure lodgings here without alighting at an inn. From my peculiar mode of travelling I saw little of the country, but could just observe that the wild beauty of the scenery and the barbarous ferocity of the inhabitants progressively increased. On entering Naples, the first circumstance that engaged my attention was an assassination. A youth ran out of a shop, pursued by a woman with a bludgeon, and a man armed with a knife. The man overtook him, and with one blow in the neck laid him dead in the road. On my expressing the emotions of horror and indignation which I felt, a Calabrian priest, who travelled with me, laughed heartily, and attempted to quiz me, as what the English call a flat. I never felt such an inclination to beat any one. Heaven knows I have little power, but he saw that I looked extremely displeased, and was silent. This same man, a

fellow of gigantic strength and stature, had expressed the most frantic terror of robbers on the road: he cried at the sight of my pistol, and it had been with great difficulty that the joint exertions of myself and the vetturino* had quieted his hysterics. . . .

Since I wrote this I have seen the museum of this city. Such statues! There is a Venus; an ideal shape of the most winning loveliness. A Bacchus, more sublime than any living being. A Satyr, making love to a youth, in which the expressed life of the sculpture, and the inconceivable beauty of the form of the youth, overcome one's repugnance to the subject. There are multitudes of wonderfully fine statues found in Herculaneum and Pompeii. We are going to see Pompeii the first day that the sea is waveless. Herculaneum is almost filled up; no more excavations are made; the king bought the ground and built a palace upon it.

You don't see much of Hunt. I wish you could contrive to see him when you go to town, and ask him what he means to answer to Lord Byron's invitation. He has now an opportunity, if he likes, of seeing Italy. What do you think of joining his party, and paying us a visit next year; I mean as soon as the reign of winter is dissolved? Write to me your thoughts upon this. I cannot express to you the pleasure it would give me to welcome such a party.

I have depression enough of spirits and not good health, though I believe the warm air of Naples does me good. We see absolutely no one here.

Adieu, my dear Peacock,

affectionately your friend,

P. B. S.

[Æt. 27]

To Thomas Medwin

["PROMETHEUS UNBOUND; THE CENCI"]

Pisa, July 20, 1820.

My dear Medwin,—

I wrote to you a day or two ago at Geneva. I have since received your letter from the mountains. How much I envy you, or rather how much I sympathize in

* Driver.

the delights of your wandering. I have a passion for such expeditions, although partly the capriciousness of my health, and partly the want of the incitement of a companion, keep me at home. I see the mountains, the sky, and the trees from my windows, and recollect, as an old man does the mistress of his youth, the raptures of a more familiar intercourse, but without his regrets, for their forms are yet living in my mind. I hope you will not pass Tuscany, leaving your promised visit unpaid. I leave it to you to make the project of taking up your abode with such an animal of the other world as I am, agreeable to your friend; but Mrs. Shelley unites with me in assuring both yourself and him that, whatever else may be found deficient, a sincere welcome is at least in waiting for you.

I am delighted with your approbation of my *Cenci,* and am encouraged to wish to present you with *Prometheus Unbound,* a drama also, but a composition of a totally different character. I do not know if it be wise to affect variety in composition, or whether the attempt to excel in many ways does not debar from excellence in one particular kind. *Prometheus Unbound* is in the merest spirit of ideal poetry, and not, as the name would indicate, a mere imitation of the Greek drama; or, indeed, if I have been successful, is it an imitation of anything. But you will judge. I hear it is just printed. and I probably shall receive copies from England before I see you. Your objection to the *Cenci*—as to the introduction of the name of God—is good, inasmuch as the play is addressed to a Protestant people; but *we* Catholics speak eternally and familiarly of the First Person of the Trinity, and, amongst *us,* religion is more interwoven with, and is less extraneous to, the system of ordinary life. As to Cenci's Curse, I know not whether I can defend it or no. I wish I may be able; and, as it often happens respecting the worst part of an author's work, it is a particular favourite with me. I prided myself—as since your approbation I hope that I had just cause to do—upon the two concluding lines of the play. I confess I cannot approve of the squeamishness which excludes the exhibition of such *subjects* from the scene —a squeamishness the produce, as I firmly believe, of a

lower tone of the public mind, and foreign to the majestic and confident wisdom of the golden age of our country. What think you of my boldness? I mean to write a play, in the spirit of human nature, without prejudice or passion, entitled *Charles the First.* So vanity intoxicates people; but let those few who praise my verses, and in whose approbation I take so much delight, answer for the sin.

I wonder what in the world the Queen has done. I should not wonder, after the whispers I have heard, to find that the green bag contained evidence that she had imitated Pasiphæ, and that the Committee should recommend to Parliament a Bill to exclude all Minotaurs from the succession. What silly stuff is this to employ a great nation about. I wish the King and the Queen, like Punch and his wife, would fight out their disputes in person.

What is very strange, I can in no manner discover your parcels; I never knew anything more unfortunate. Klieber sends me your letters regularly (which, by the bye, I wish in future you would direct to Pisa, as I have no money business now in Florence), but he has heard of no parcel or book.

This warm weather agrees excellently with me. I only wish it would last all the year. Many things both to say and to hear be referred until we meet.

Your affectionate friend,

P. B. S.

[Æt. 29]

To Leigh Hunt

[A proposal concerning a periodical]

Pisa, August 26th, 1821.

My dearest Friend,—

Since I last wrote to you, I have been on a visit to Lord Byron at Ravenna. The result of this visit was a determination on his part to come and live at Pisa; and I have taken the finest palace on the Lung' Arno for him. But the material part of my visit consists in a message which he desires me to give you, and which I think ought to add to your determination—for such a one I hope you have formed—of restoring your shattered health and spirits

by a migration to these "regions mild of calm and serene air."

He proposes that you should come and go shares with him and me, in a periodical work, to be conducted here; in which each of the contracting parties should publish all their original compositions, and share the profits. He proposed it to Moore, but for some reason it was never brought to bear. There can be no doubt that the *profits* of any scheme in which you and Lord Byron engage, must, from various, yet co-operating reasons, be very great. As for myself, I am, for the present, only a sort of link between you and him, until you can know each other and effectuate the arrangement; since (to intrust you with a secret which, for your sake, I withhold from Lord Byron) nothing would induce me to share in the profits, and still less in the borrowed splendour of such a partnership. You and he, in different manners, would be equal, and would bring, in a different manner, but in the same proportion, equal stocks of reputation and success. Do not let my frankness with you, nor my belief that you deserve it more than Lord Byron, have the effect of deterring you from assuming a station in modern literature, which the universal voice of my contemporaries forbids me either to stoop or to aspire to. I am, and I desire to be, nothing.

I did not ask Lord Byron to assist me in sending a remittance for your journey; because there are men, however excellent, from whom we would never receive an obligation, in the worldly sense of the word; and I am as jealous for my friend as for myself. I, as you know, have it not: but I suppose that at last I shall make up an impudent face, and ask Horace Smith to add to the many obligations he has conferred on me. I know I need only ask.

I think I have never told you how very much I like your Amyntas; it almost reconciles me to Translations. In another sense, I still demur. You might have written another such poem as the "Nymphs," with no great access of effort. I am full of thoughts and plans, and should do something if the feeble and irritable frame which incloses it was willing to obey the spirit. I fancy that then I should do great things. Before this

you will have seen "Adonais." Lord Byron, I suppose from modesty on account of his being mentioned in it, did not say a word of "Adonais," though he was loud in his praise of "Prometheus": and, what you will not agree with him in, censure of the "Cenci." Certainly, if "Marino Faliero"* is a drama, the "Cenci" is not: but that between ourselves. Lord Byron is reformed, as far as gallantry goes, and lives with a beautiful and sentimental Italian lady, who is as much attached to him as may be. I trust greatly to his intercourse with you, for his creed to become as pure as he thinks his conduct is. He has many generous and exalted qualities, but the canker of aristocracy wants to be cut out. . . .

[Æt. 29]

To Thomas Love Peacock

["CAIN; ADONAIS; HELLAS"]

Pisa, January [probably 11th], 1822.

My dear Peacock,—

. . . I am still at Pisa, where I have at length fitted up some rooms at the top of a lofty palace that overlooks the city and the surrounding region, and have collected books and plants about me, and established myself for some indefinite time, which, if I read the future, will not be short. I wish you to send my books by the very first opportunity, and I expect in them a great augmentation of comfort. Lord Byron is established here, and we are constant companions. No small relief this, after the dreary solitude of the understanding and the imagination in which we past the first years of our expatriation, yoked to all sorts of miseries and discomforts.

Of course you have seen his last volume, and if you before thought him a great poet, what is your opinion now that you have read *Cain!* The *Foscari* and *Sardanapalus* I have not seen; but as they are in the style of his later writings, I doubt not they are very fine. We expect Hunt here every day, and remain in great anxiety on account of the heavy gales which he must

* Byron's *Marino Faliero* was published in 1821; *The Cenci* had appeared in 1819.

have encountered at Christmas. Lord Byron has fitted up the lower apartments of his palace for him, and Hunt will be agreeably surprised to find a commodious lodging prepared for him after the fatigues and dangers of his passage. I have been long idle, and, as far as writing goes, despondent; but I am now engaged on *Charles the First*,* and a devil of a nut it is to crack.

Mary and Clara (who is not with us just at present) are well, and so is our little boy, the image of poor William. We live as usual, tranquilly. I get up, or at least wake early; read and write till two; dine; go to Lord B.'s, and ride, or play billiards, as the weather permits; and sacrifice the evening either to light books or whoever happens to drop in. Our furniture, which is very neat, cost fewer shillings than that at Marlow did pounds sterling; and our windows are full of plants, which turn the sunny winter into spring. My health is better—my cares are lighter; and although nothing will cure the consumption of my purse, yet it drags on a sort of life in death, very like its master, and seems, like Fortunatus's, always empty yet never quite exhausted. You will have seen my *Adonais* and perhaps my *Hellas*, and I think, whatever you may judge of the subject, the composition of the first poem will not wholly displease you. I wish I had something better to do than furnish this jingling food for the hunger of oblivion, called verse, but I have not; and since you give me no encouragement about India I cannot hope to have.

How is your little star, and the heaven which contains the milky way in which it glimmers?

Adieu.—Yours ever most truly,

S.

* Not finished. Shelley was drowned in the following August.

[Æt. 26] WILLIAM CULLEN BRYANT
1794-1878

To his Mother

[his marriage]

June, 1821.

Dear Mother,—

I hasten to send you the melancholy intelligence of what has lately happened to me.

Early on the evening of the eleventh day of the present month I was at a neighboring house in this village. Several people of both sexes were assembled in one of the apartments, and three or four others, with myself, were in another. At last came in a little elderly gentleman, pale, thin, with a solemn countenance, pleuritic voice, hooked nose, and hollow eyes. It was not long before we were summoned to attend in the apartment where he and the rest of the company were gathered. We went in and took our seats; the little elderly gentleman with the hooked nose prayed, and we all stood up. When he had finished, most of us sat down. The gentleman with the hooked nose then muttered certain cabalistical expressions which I was too much frightened to remember, but I recollect that at the conclusion I was given to understand that I was married to a young lady of the name of Frances Fairchild, whom I perceived standing by my side, and I hope in the course of a few months to have the pleasure of introducing to you as your daughter-in-law, which is a matter of some interest to the poor girl, who has neither father nor mother in the world.

I have not "played the fool and married an Ethiop for the jewel in her ear." I looked only for goodness of heart, an ingenuous and affectionate disposition, a good understanding, etc., and the character of my wife is too frank and single-hearted to suffer me to fear that I may be disappointed. I do myself wrong; I did not look for these nor any other qualities, but they trapped me before I was aware, and now I am married in spite of myself.

Thus the current of destiny carries us along. None but a madman would swim against the stream, and none but

a fool would exert himself to swim with it. The best way is to float quietly with the tide. So much for philosophy—now to business. . . .

Your affectionate son,
WILLIAM.

[Æt. 37]

To R. H. DANA

[CHOLERA; JOURNEY TO ILLINOIS]

NEW YORK, October 8, 1832.

My dear Sir,—

. . . You are right; we have had a fearful time in New York, the pestilence striking down its victims on the right hand and the left, often at noon-day, but mostly in darkness, for of the thousands who had the disorder three quarters were attacked at the dead of night. I have been here from the 12th of July, when I returned from the westward, till the present time, coming every morning from Hoboken to attend to my daily occupation, every morning witnessing the same melancholy spectacle of deserted and silent streets and forsaken dwellings, and every day looking over and sending out to the world the list of the sick and dead. My own health and that of my wife and youngest child in the meantime have been bad, with a feeling in the stomach like that produced by taking lead or some other mineral poison. Since the second week in September the state of things has changed, and my own health was never better than it is at this moment. . . .

I have seen the great West, where I ate corn bread and hominy, slept in log houses, with twenty men, women, and children in the same room. . . . At Jacksonville, where my two brothers live, I got on a horse, and travelled about a hundred miles to the northward over the immense prairies, with scattered settlements, on the edges of the groves. These prairies, of a soft, fertile garden soil, and a smooth, undulating surface, on which you may put a horse to full speed, covered with high, thinly growing grass, full of weeds and gaudy flowers, and destitute of bushes or trees, perpetually brought to my mind the idea of their having been once cultivated. They look to me like the fields of a race which had

passed away, whose enclosures and habitations had decayed, but on whose vast and rich plains, smoothed and levelled by tillage, the forest had not yet encroached. . . .

[Æt. 42]

To His Wife

[A QUARREL BETWEEN EDITORS]

New York, August 21st, [1837.]

My friends, when they meet me, congratulate me on being yet alive. You will ask what this means. On Saturday last I received a challenge. A good-natured, well-bred man, Reynolds, who formerly lectured on Captain Symmes's "Theory of the Earth," and who has been appointed historiographer of the expedition now fitting out for the South Seas, walked into the office on "unpleasant business," as he called it, and presented me a written invitation to fight a duel, from a man named Holland, one of the editors of the "Times" newspaper. Holland had taken offence at something which appeared in the "Evening Post" on the subject of the "Times," and wrote to me for an explanation. My answer did not satisfy him; he wrote again; I declined giving any other answer, and so he asked me to fight. I told Mr. Reynolds that when Mr. Leggett,* a gentleman of strict honor, was associated with me in the conduct of the "Evening Post," he wrote Holland word that he was a scoundrel, which he chose to take quietly. I said that Holland must settle that affair first, and that then I would consider whether his note deserved any further reply. Reynolds was very anxious to persuade me to give some other answer, and said that the affair might easily be adjusted. He would not take back my note to Holland, so I wrote down what I had given above as my answer, and sent it by a boy. When you come down you shall see the correspondence. My friends are much amused at my having got into such a scrape, and laugh heartily at the idea that a popinjay who curls his whiskers should think to engage me in a duel.

* William Leggett (1802-1839.) Fought a duel at Weehawken, with Blake of the Park Theatre.

[Æt. 76]

To Joseph H. Richards

[BRYANT'S MANNER OF LIFE AT SEVENTY-SIX]

New York, March 30th, 1871.

. . I rise early, at this time of the year about half past five; in summer half an hour, or even an hour, earlier. Immediately, with very little encumbrance of clothing, I begin a series of exercises, for the most part designed to expand the chest, and at the same time call into action all the muscles and articulations of the body. These are performed with dumb-bells—the very lightest, covered with flannel—with a pole, a horizontal bar, and a light chair swung round my head. After a full hour, and sometimes more, passed in this manner, I bathe from head to foot. When at my place in the country I sometimes shorten my exercises in the chamber, and, going out, occupy myself in some work which requires brisk motion. After my bath, if breakfast be not ready, I sit down to my studies till I am called.

My breakfast is a simple one—hominy and milk, or, in place of hominy, brown bread, or oatmeal, or wheaten grits, and, in the season, baked sweet apples. Buckwheat cakes I do not decline, nor any other article of vegetable food, but animal food I never take at breakfast. Tea and coffee I never touch at any time; sometimes I take a cup of chocolate, which has no narcotic effect, and agrees with me very well. At breakfast I often take fruit, either in its natural state or freshly stewed.

After breakfast I occupy myself for a while with my studies; and when in town I walk down to the office of the "Evening Post," nearly three miles distant, and after about three hours return, always walking, whatever be the weather or the state of the streets. In the country I am engaged in my literary tasks till a feeling of weariness drives me out into the open air, and I go upon my farm or into the garden, and prune the fruit-trees or perform some other work about them which they need, and then go back to my books. I do not often drive out, preferring to walk.

In the country I dine early, and it is only at that meal that I take either meat or fish, and of these but a mod-

erate quantity, making my dinner mostly of vegetables. At the meal which is called tea I take only a little bread and butter, with fruit, if it be on the table. In town, where I dine later, I make but two meals a day. Fruit makes a considerable part of my diet, and I eat it at almost any hour of the day without inconvenience. My drink is water, yet I sometimes, though rarely, take a glass of wine. I am a natural temperance man, finding myself rather confused than exhilarated by wine. I never meddle with tobacco, except to quarrel with its use.

That I may rise early, I, of course, go to bed early; in town as early as ten; in the country somewhat earlier. For many years I have avoided in the evening every kind of literary occupation which tasks the faculties, such as composition, even to the writing of letters, for the reason that it excites the nervous system and prevents sound sleep. My brother told me not long since that he had seen in a Chicago newspaper, and several other western journals, a paragraph in which it was said that I am in the habit of taking quinine as a stimulant, that I have depended on the excitement it produces in writing my verses, and that, in consequence of using it in that way, I have become as deaf as a post. As to my deafness, you know that to be false; and the rest of the story is equally so. I abominate drugs and narcotics, and have always carefully avoided anything which spurs nature to exertions which it would not otherwise make. Even with my food I do not take the usual condiments, such as pepper and the like.

[Æt. 44] THOMAS ARNOLD

1795–1842

To the Rev. G. Cornish

[objection to dickens; wordsworth]

Fox How, July 6, 1839.

. . . As I believe that the English universities are the best places in the world for those who can profit by them, so I think for the idle and self-indulgent they are about the very worst, and I would far rather send a boy to Van Diemen's Land, where he must work for his bread,

than send him to Oxford to live in luxury, without any desire in his mind to avail himself of his advantages. Childishness in boys, even of good abilities, seems to me to be a growing fault, and I do not know to what to ascribe it, except to the great number of exciting books of amusement, like Pickwick and Nickleby, Bentley's Magazine, &c., &c. These completely satisfy all the intellectual appetite of a boy, which is rarely very voracious, and leave him totally palled, not only for his regular work, which I could well excuse in comparison, but for good literature of all sorts, even for History and for Poetry.

I went up to Oxford to the Commemoration, for the first time for twenty-one years, to see Wordsworth and Bunsen receive their degrees; and to me, remembering how old Coleridge inoculated a little knot of us with the love of Wordsworth, when his name was in general a byword, it was striking to witness the thunders of applause, repeated over and over again, with which he was greeted in the theatre by Undergraduates and Masters of Arts alike.

[Æt. 44]

To H. Balston

[QUALIFICATIONS OF A TEACHER]

Rugby, November 21, 1839.

. . . With regard to the questions in your letter, I hold that to a great degree in the choice of a profession, "sua cuique Deus fit dira cupido," a man's inclination for a calling is a great presumption that he either is or will be fit for it. And in education this holds very strongly, for he who likes boys has probably a daily sympathy with them; and to be in sympathy with the mind you propose to influence is at once indispensable, and will enable you in a great degree to succeed in influencing it.

Another point to which I attach much importance is liveliness. This seems to me an essential condition of sympathy with creatures so lively as boys are naturally, and it is a great matter to make them understand that liveliness is not folly or thoughtlessness. Now I think

the prevailing manner amongst many very valuable men at Oxford is the very opposite to liveliness; and I think that this is the case partly with yourself; not at all from affectation, but from natural temper, encouraged, perhaps, rather than checked, by a belief that it is right and becoming. But this appears to me to be in point of manner the great difference between a clergyman with a parish and a schoolmaster. It is an illustration of St. Paul's rule, "Rejoice with them that rejoice, and weep with them that weep." A clergyman's intercourse is very much with the sick and the poor, where liveliness would be greatly misplaced; but a schoolmaster's is with the young, the strong, and the happy, and he cannot get on with them unless in animal spirits he can sympathize with them, and show them that his thoughtfulness is not connected with selfishness and weakness. At least this applies, I think, to a young man; for when a teacher gets to an advanced age, gravity, I suppose, would not misbecome him, for liveliness might then seem unnatural, and his sympathy with boys must be limited, I suppose, then, to their great interests rather than their feelings. . . .

[Æt. 21]

JOHN KEATS

1795–1821

To J. H. Reynolds

["I find that I cannot exist without poetry"]

Carisbrooke, April 17th, 1817.

My dear Reynolds,

Ever since I wrote to my brother from Southampton, I have been in a taking, and at this moment I am about to become settled, for I have unpacked my books, put them into a snug corner, pinned up Haydon, Mary Queen [of] Scots, and Milton with his daughters in a row. In the passage I found a head of Shakespeare, which I had not before seen. It is most likely the same that George spoke so well of, for I like it extremely. Well, this head I have hung over my books, just above the three in a row, having first discarded a French Ambassador; now this alone is a good morning's work. Yesterday I went to Shanklin, which occasioned a great debate in my mind

whether I should live there or at Carisbrooke. Shanklin is a most beautiful place; sloping wood and meadow ground reach round the Chine, which is a cleft between the cliffs, of the depth of nearly 300 feet at least. This cleft is filled with trees and bushes in the narrow part; and as it widens becomes bare, if it were not for primroses on one side, which spread to the very verge of the sea, and some fishermen's huts on the other, perched midway in the balustrades of beautiful green hedges along their steps down to the sands. But the sea, Jack, the sea, the little waterfall, then the white cliff, then St. Catherine's Hill, "the sheep in the meadows, the cows in the corn." Then why are you at Carisbrooke? say you. Because, in the first place, I should be at twice the expense, and three times the inconvenience; next, that from here I can see your continent from a little hill close by, the whole north angle of the Isle of Wight, with the water between us; in the third place, I see Carisbrooke Castle from my window, and have found several delightful wood-alleys, and copses, and quick freshes; as for primroses, the Island ought to be called Primrose Island, that is, if the nation of Cowslips agree thereto, of which there are divers clans just beginning to lift up their heads. Another reason of my fixing is, that I am more in reach of the places around me. I intend to walk over the Island, east, west, north, south. I have not seen many specimens of ruins. I don't think, however, I shall ever see one to surpass Carisbrooke Castle. The trench is overgrown with the smoothest turf, and the walls with ivy. The Keep within side is one bower of ivy; a colony of jackdaws have been there for many years. I daresay I have seen many a descendant of some old cawer who peeped through the bars at Charles the First, when he was there in confinement. On the road from Cowes to Newport I saw some extensive Barracks, which disgusted me extremely with the Government for placing such a nest of debauchery in so beautiful a place. I asked a man on the coach about this, and he said that the people had been spoiled. In the room where I slept at Newport, I found this on the window—"O Isle spoilt by the military!"

The wind is in a sulky fit, and I feel that it would be

no bad thing to be the favourite of some Fairy, who would give one the power of seeing how our friends got on at a distance. I should like, of all loves, a sketch of you, and Tom, and George in ink: which Haydon will do if you tell him how I want them. From want of regular rest I have been rather *narvus,* and the passage in Lear, "Do you not hear the sea!" has haunted me intensely.

> It keeps eternal whisperings around
> Desolate shores, and with its mighty swell
> Gluts twice ten thousand caverns, till the spell
> Of Hecate leaves them their old shadowy sound.
> Often 'tis in such gentle temper found,
> That scarcely will the very smallest shell
> Be moved for days from whence it sometime fell,
> When last the winds of heaven were unbound.
> Oh ye! who have your eye-balls vexed and tired,
> Feast them upon the wideness of the Sea;
> Oh ye! whose ears are dinn'd with uproar rude,
> Or fed too much with cloying melody,—
> Sit ye near some old cavern's mouth, and brood
> Until ye start, as if the sea-nymphs quired!

I'll tell you what—on the 23rd was Shakespeare born. Now if I should receive a letter from you, and another from my brother on that day, 'twould be a parlous good thing. Whenever you write, say a word or two on some passage in Shakespeare that may have come rather new to you, which must be continually happening, notwithstanding that we read the same play forty times—for instance, the following from the "Tempest" never struck me so forcibly as at present:—

> "Urchins
> Shall, for that vast of night that they may work,
> All exercise on thee."

How can I help bringing to your mind the line—

> "In the dark backward and abysm of time."

I find that I cannot exist without Poetry—without eternal Poetry; I began with a little, but habit has made me

a leviathan. I had become all in a tremble from not having written anything of late: the Sonnet over-leaf did me good; I slept the better last night for it; this morning, however, I am nearly as bad again. Just now I opened Spenser, and the first lines I saw were these:—

> "The noble heart that harbours virtuous thought,
> And is with child of glorious great intent,
> Can never rest until it forth have brought
> Th' eternal brood of glory excellent."

Let me know particularly about Haydon; ask him to write to me about Hunt, if it be only ten lines. I hope all is well. I shall forthwith begin my "Endymion," which I hope I shall have got some way into by the time you come, when we will read our verses in a delightful place I have set my heart upon, near the Castle. Give my love to your sisters severally.

Your sincere friend,
JOHN KEATS

[Æt. 21]

TO JOHN TAYLOR *
["THAT HYDRA, THE DUN"]
MARGATE, May 16th, 1817.

My dear Sir,

I am extremely indebted to you for your liberality in the shape of manufactured rag, value 20 l., and shall immediately proceed to destroy some of the minor heads of that Hydra the Dun; to conquer which the knight need have no sword, shield, cuirass, cuisses, herbadgeon, spear, casque, greaves, paldrons, spurs, chevron, or any other scaly commodity, but he need only take the Bank-note of Faith and Cash of Salvation, and set out against the monster, invoking the aid of no Archimago or Urganda, but finger me the paper, light as the Sybil's leaves in Virgil, whereat the fiend skulks off with his tail between his legs. Touch him with this enchanted paper, and he whips you his head away as fast as a snail's horn; but then the horrid propensity he has to put it up again has

* Of the publishing firm Taylor and Hessey.

discouraged many very valiant knights. He is such a never-ending, still-beginning, sort of a body, like my landlady of the Bell. I think I could make a nice little allegorical poem, called "The Dun," where we would have the Castle of Carelessness, the Drawbridge of Credit, Sir Novelty Fashion's expedition against the City of Tailors, &c., &c. I went day by day at my poem for a month; at the end of which time, the other day, I found my brain so overwrought, that I had neither rhyme nor reason in it, so was obliged to give up for a few days. I hope soon to be able to resume my work. I have endeavoured to do so once or twice; but to no purpose. Instead of poetry, I have a swimming in my head, and feel all the effects of a mental debauch, lowness of spirits, anxiety to go on, without the power to do so, which does not at all tend to my ultimate progression. However, to-morrow I will begin my next month. This evening I go to Canterbury, having got tired of Margate; I was not right in my head when I came. At Canterbury I hope the remembrance of Chaucer will set me forward like a billiard ball. I have some idea of seeing the Continent some time this summer.

In repeating how sensible I am of your kindness, I remain,

Your obedient servant and friend,
JOHN KEATS.

[Æt. 22]

To J. H. REYNOLDS

[CRITICISM OF WORDSWORTH]

HAMPSTEAD, Feb. 3, 1818.

My dear Reynolds,

I thank you for your dish of filberts. Would I could get a basket of them by way of dessert every day for the sum of twopence (two sonnets on Robin Hood sent by the twopenny post). Would we were a sort of ethereal pigs, and turned loose to feed upon spiritual mast and acorns! which would be merely being a squirrel and feeding upon filberts; for what is a squirrel but an airy pig, or a filbert but a sort of archangelical acorn? About the nuts being worth cracking, all I can say is, that where there are a throng of delightful images ready drawn,

simplicity is the only thing. It may be said that we ought to read our contemporaries, that Wordsworth, &c., should have their due from us. But, for the sake of a few fine imaginative or domestic passages, are we to be bullied into a certain philosophy engendered in the whims of an egotist? Every man has his speculations, but every man does not brood and peacock over them till he makes a false coinage and deceives himself. Many a man can travel to the very bourne of Heaven, and yet want confidence to put down his half-seeing. Sancho will invent a journey heavenward as well as anybody. We hate poetry that has a palpable design upon us, and, if we do not agree, seems to put its hand into its breeches pocket. Poetry should be great and unobtrusive, a thing which enters into one's soul, and does not startle it or amaze it with itself, but with its subject. How beautiful are the retired flowers! How would they lose their beauty were they to throng into the highway, crying out, "Admire me, I am a violet! Dote upon me, I am a primrose!" Modern poets differ from the Elizabethans in this: each of the moderns, like an Elector of Hanover, governs his petty state, and knows how many straws are swept daily from the causeways in all his dominions, and has a continual itching that all the housewives should have their coppers well scoured. The ancients were Emperors of vast provinces; they had only heard of the remote ones, and scarcely cared to visit them. I will cut all this. I will have no more of Wordsworth or Hunt in particular. Why should we be of the tribe of Manasseh, when we can wander with Esau? Why should we kick against the pricks, when we can walk on roses? Why should we be owls, when we can be eagles? Why be teased with "nice-eyed wagtails," when we have in sight "the cherub Contemplation?" Why with Wordsworth's "Matthew with a bough of wilding in his hand," when we can have Jacques "under an oak," &c.? The secret of the "bough of wilding" will run through your head faster than I can write it. Old Matthew spoke to him some years ago on some nothing, and because he happens in an evening walk to imagine the figure of the old man, he must stamp it down in black and white, and it is henceforth sacred. I don't mean to deny Wordsworth's

grandeur and Hunt's merit, but I mean to say we need not be teased with grandeur and merit when we can have them uncontaminated and unobtrusive. Let us have the old Poets and Robin Hood. Your letter and its sonnets gave me more pleasure than will the Fourth Book of "Childe Harold," and the whole of anybody's life and opinions.

In return for your dish of filberts, I have gathered a few catkins. I hope they'll look pretty.

I hope you will like them—they are at least written in the spirit of outlawry. Here are the Mermaid lines:—

Souls of Poets dead and gone. &c.

In the hope that these scribblings will be some amusement for you this evening, I remain, copying on the hill,

Your sincere friend and co-scribbler,

JOHN KEATS.

[Æt. 22]

TO MR. TAYLOR

[POETIC AXIOMS; "ENDYMION"]

HAMPSTEAD, 27 Feb., [1818.]

My dear Taylor,

. . . In "Endymion," I have most likely but moved into the go-cart from the leading-strings. In poetry I have a few axioms, and you will see how far I am from their centre.

1st. I think poetry should surprise by a fine excess, and not by singularity; it should strike the reader as a wording of his own highest thoughts, and appear almost a remembrance.

2nd. Its touches of beauty should never be half-way, thereby making the reader breathless, instead of content. The rise, the progress, the setting of imagery, should, like the sun, come natural to him, shine over him, and set soberly, although in magnificence, leaving him in the luxury of twilight. But it is easier to think what poetry should be, than to write it. And this leads me to

Another axiom—That if poetry comes not as naturally as the leaves to a tree, it had better not come at all. However it may be with me, I cannot help looking into new countries with "Oh, for a muse of fire to ascend!" If "Endymion" serves me as a pioneer, perhaps I ought to

be content, for, thank God, I can read, and perhaps understand, Shakespeare to his depths; and I have, I am sure, many friends, who, if I fail, will attribute any change in my life and temper to humbleness rather than pride—to a cowering under the wings of great poets, rather than to a bitterness that I am not appreciated. I am anxious to get "Endymion" printed that I may forget it, and proceed. I have copied the Third Book, and begun the Fourth. I will take care the printer shall not trip up my heels.

Remember me to Percy Street.

Your sincere and obliged friend,

JOHN KEATS.

P. S. You shall have a short preface in good time.

[Æt. 22]

To Mr. Rice

[MILTON AND SALMASIUS]

TEIGNMOUTH, 25 March, 1818.

My dear Rice,

Being in the midst of your favourite Devon, I should not, by rights, pen one word but it should contain a vast portion of wit, wisdom, and learning; for I have heard that Milton, ere he wrote his answer to Salmasius, came into these parts, and for one whole month, rolled himself for three whole hours a day, in a certain meadow hard by us, where the mark of his nose at equidistances is still shown. The exhibitor of said meadow further saith, that, after these rollings, not a nettle sprang up in all the seven acres for seven years, and that from said time a new sort of plant was made from the whitethorn, of a thornless nature, very much used by the bucks of the present day to rap their boots withal. This account made me very naturally suppose that the nettles and thorns etherealised by the scholar's rotatory motion, and garnered in his head, thence flew, after a dew of fermentation, against the luckless Salmasius, and occasioned his well-known and unhappy end. What a happy thing it would be if we could settle our thoughts and make our minds up on any matter in five minutes, and remain

content, that is, build a sort of mental cottage of feelings, quiet and pleasant—to have a sort of philosophical back-garden, and cheerful holiday-keeping front one. But, alas! this never can be; for, as the material cottager knows there are such places as France and Italy, and the Andes, and burning mountains, so the spiritual cottager has knowledge of the terra semi-incognita of things unearthly, and cannot, for his life, keep in the check-rein—or I should stop here, quiet and comfortable in my theory of nettles. You will see, however, I am obliged to run wild, being attracted by the load-stone, concatenation. No sooner had I settled the knotty point of Salmasius, than the devil put this whim into my head in the likeness of one of Pythagoras's questionings—Did Milton do more good or harm in the world? He wrote, let me inform you (for I have it from a friend who had it of——,) he wrote "Lycidas," "Comus," "Paradise Lost," and other Poems, with much delectable prose; he was moreover an active friend to man all his life, and has been since his death. Very good. But, my dear fellow, I must let you know that, as there is ever the same quantity of matter constituting this habitable globe, as the ocean, notwithstanding the enormous changes and revolutions taking place in some or other of its demesnes, notwithstanding waterspouts, whirlpools, and mighty rivers emptying themselves into it, it still is made up of the same bulk, nor ever varies the number of its atoms; and, as a certain bulk of water was instituted at the creation, so, very likely, a certain portion of intellect was spun forth into the thin air, for the brains of man to prey upon it. You will see my drift, without any unnecessary parenthesis. That which is contained in the Pacific could not lie in the hollow of the Caspian; that which was in Milton's head could not find room in Charles the Second's. He, like a moon, attracted intellect to its flow—it has not ebbed yet, but has left the shore-pebble all bare—I mean all bucks, authors of Hengist, and Castlereaghs of the present day, who, without Milton's gormandising, might have been all wise men. Now for as much as I was very predisposed to a country I had heard you speak so highly of, I took particular notice of everything during my journey, and have bought some nice folio asses' skins for memo-

randums. I have seen everything but the wind—and that, they say, becomes visible by taking a dose of acorns, or sleeping one night in a hog-trough, with your tail to the sow-sow-west.

I went yesterday to Dawlish fair.

> "Over the Hill and over the Dale,
> And over the Bourne to Dawlish,
> Where ginger-bread wives have a scanty sale,
> And ginger-bread nuts are smallish," &c. &c.

Your sincere friend,
JOHN KEATS.

[Æt. 22]

To Mr. Taylor

["GET LEARNING—GET UNDERSTANDING"]

TEIGNMOUTH, 27 April, 1818.

My dear Taylor,

I think I did wrong to leave to you all the trouble of "Endymion." But I could not help it then—another time I shall be more bent to all sorts of troubles and disagreeables. Young men, for some time, have an idea that such a thing as happiness is to be had, and therefore are extremely impatient under any unpleasant restraining. In time, however,—of such stuff is the world about them,—they know better, and instead of striving from uneasiness, greet it as an habitual sensation, a pannier which is to weigh upon them through life. And in proportion to my disgust at the task is my sense of your kindness and anxiety. The book pleased me much. It is very free from faults; and, although there are one or two words that I should wish replaced, I see in many places an improvement greatly to the purpose.

I was proposing to travel over the North this summer. There is but one thing to prevent me. I know nothing —I have read nothing—and I mean to follow Solomon's directions, "Get learning—get understanding." I find earlier days are gone by—I find that I can have no enjoyment in the world but continual drinking of knowledge. I find there is no worthy pursuit but the idea of doing some good to the world. Some do it with their society; some with their wit; some with their benevo-

lence; some with a sort of power of conferring pleasure and good humour on all they meet—and in a thousand ways, all dutiful to the command of great nature. There is but one way for me. The road lies through application, study, and thought. I will pursue it; and, for that end, purpose retiring for some years. I have been hovering for some time between an exquisite sense of the luxurious, and a love for philosophy: were I calculated for the former I should be glad. But as I am not, I shall turn all my soul to the latter.

My brother Tom is getting better, and I hope I shall see both him and Reynolds better before I retire from the world. I shall see you soon, and have some talk about what books I shall take with me.

Your very sincere friend,
JOHN KEATS.

[Æt. 22]

To J. H. REYNOLDS

[ON VISITING BURNS'S BIRTHPLACE]

MAYBOLE, July 11 [1818].

My dear Reynolds,—

I'll not run over the ground we have passed; that would be nearly as bad as telling a dream—unless, perhaps, I do it in the manner of the Laputan printing press; that is, I put down mountains, rivers, lakes, dells, glens, rocks, and clouds with beautiful, enchanting, gothic, picturesque, — fine, delightful, enchanting, grand, sublime — a few blisters, &c.—and now you have our journey thus far; where I begin a letter to you because I am approaching Burns's cottage very fast. We have made continual inquiries from the time we left his tomb at Dumfries. His name, of course, is known all about: his great reputation among the plodding people is, "that he wrote a good mony sensible things." One of the pleasantest ways of annulling self is approaching such a shrine as the cottage of Burns: we need not think of his misery—that is all gone, bad luck to it! I shall look upon it hereafter with unmixed pleasure, as I do upon my Stratford-on-Avon day with Bailey. I shall fill this sheet for you in the Bardie's country, going no farther than this, till I

get to the town of Ayr, which will be a nine miles' walk to tea.

We were talking on different and indifferent things, when, on a sudden, we turned a corner upon the immediate country of Ayr. The sight was as rich as possible. I had no conception that the native place of Burns was so beautiful; the idea I had was more desolate: his *Rigs of Barley* seemed always to me but a few strips of green on a cold hill—Oh, prejudice!—It was as rich as Devon. I endeavored to drink in the prospect, that I might spin it out to you, as the silk-worm makes silk from the mulberry leaves. I cannot recollect it. Besides all the beauty, there were the mountains of Annan Isle, black and huge over the sea. We came down upon everything suddenly; there were in our way the "bonny Doon," with the brig that Tam o'Shanter crossed, Kirk Alloway, Burns's Cottage, and then the Brigs of Ayr. First we stood upon the Bridge across the Doon, surrounded by every phantasy of green in tree, meadow, and hill; the stream of the Doon, as a farmer told us, is covered with trees "from head to foot." You know those beautiful heaths, so fresh against the weather of a summer's evening; there was one stretching along behind the trees.

I wish I knew always the humour my friends would be in at opening a letter of mine, to suit it to them as nearly as possible. I could always find an egg-shell for melancholy, and, as for merriment, a witty humour will turn anything to account. My head is sometimes in such a whirl in considering the million likings and antipathies of our moments, that I can get into no settled strain in my letters. My wig! Burns and sentimentality coming across you and Frank Floodgate in the office. Oh, Scenery, that thou shouldst be crushed between two puns! As for them, I venture the rascalliest in the Scotch region. I hope Brown does not put them in his journal; if he does, I must sit on the cutty-stool all next winter. We went to Kirk Alloway. "A prophet is no prophet in his own country." We went to the Cottage and took some whisky. I wrote a sonnet for the mere sake of writing some lines under the roof; they are so bad I cannot transcribe them. The man at the Cottage was a great bore with his anecdotes. I hate the rascal. His life consists

in fuzzy, fuzzy, fuzziest. He drinks glasses five for the quarter and twelve for the hour; he is a mahogany-faced old jackass who knew Burns: he ought to have been kicked for having spoken to him. He calls himself "a curious old bitch," but he is a flat old dog. I should like to employ Caliph Vathek to kick him. Oh, the flummery of a birthplace! Cant! Cant! Cant! It is enough to give a spirit the guts-ache! Many a true word, they say, is spoken in jest—this may be because his gab hindered my sublimity: the flat dog made me write a flat sonnet. My dear Reynolds, I cannot write about scenery and visitings. Fancy is indeed less than present palpable reality, but it is greater than remembrance. You would lift your eyes from Homer only to see close before you the real Isle of Tenedos. You would rather read Homer afterwards than remember yourself. One song of Burns's is of more worth to you than all I could think for a whole year in his native country. His misery is a dead weight upon the nimbleness of one's quill; I tried to forget it—to drink toddy without any care—to write a merry sonnet—it won't do—he talked with bitches, he drank with blackguards, he was miserable. We can see horribly clear, in the works of such a man, his whole life, as if we were God's spies. What were his addresses to Jean in the after part of his life? I should not speak so to you.—Yet, why not? You are not in the same case—you are in the right path—and you shall not be deceived. I have spoken to you against marriage, but it was general. The prospect in those matters has been to me so blank, that I have been not unwilling to die. I would not now, for I have inducements to life—I must see my little nephews in America, and I must see you marry your lovely wife. My sensations are sometimes deadened for weeks together—but, believe me, I have more than once yearned for the time of your happiness to come, as much as I could for myself after the lips of Juliet. From the tenor of my occasional rhodomontade in chit-chat, you might have been deceived concerning me in these points. Upon my soul, I have been getting more and more close to you every day, ever since I knew you, and now one of the first pleasures I look to is your happy marriage—the more, since I have felt the pleasure of loving a sister-in-law.

I did not think it possible to become so much attached in so short a time. Things like these, and they are real, have made me resolve to have a care of my health—you must be as careful. . . .

Tell my friends I do all I can for them, that is, drink their health in Toddy. Perhaps I may have some lines, by-and-by, to send you fresh, on your own letter.

Your affectionate friend,

JOHN KEATS.

[Æt. 22]

TO BENJAMIN BAILEY

[THE SOCIETY OF WOMEN]

INVERARY, July 18 [1818].

My dear Bailey,—

The only day I have had the chance of seeing you when you were last in London, I took every advantage of,—some devil led you out of the way. Now I have written to Reynolds to tell me where you will be in Cumberland—so that I cannot miss you. . . . And here, Bailey, I will say a few words, written in a sane and sober mind (a very scarce thing with me), for they may, hereafter, save you a great deal of trouble about me, which you do not deserve, and for which I ought to be bastinadoed. I carry all matters to an extreme; so that when I have any little vexation, it grows, in five minutes, into a theme for Sophocles. Then, and in that temper, if I write to any friend, I have so little self-possession, that I give him matter for grieving, at the very time, perhaps, when I am laughing at a pun. Your last letter made me blush for the pain I had given you. I know my own disposition so well that I am certain of writing many times hereafter in the same strain to you: now, you know how far to believe in them. You must allow for Imagination. I know I shall not be able to help it.

I am sorry you are grieved at my not continuing my visits to Little Britain. Yet I think I have, as far as a man can do who has books to read and subjects to think upon. For that reason I have been nowhere else except to Wentworth Place, so nigh at hand. Moreover, I have been too often in a state of health that made it prudent not to hazard the night air. Yet, further, I will confess

to you that I cannot enjoy society, small or numerous. I am certain that our Fair friends are glad I should come for the mere sake of my coming; but I am certain I bring with me a vexation they are better without. If I can possibly, at any time, feel my temper coming upon me, I refrain even from a promised visit. I am certain I have not a right feeling towards women—at this moment I am striving to be just to them, but I cannot. Is it because they fall so far beneath my boyish imagination? When I was a schoolboy I thought a fair woman a pure goddess; my mind was a soft nest in which some one of them slept, though she knew it not. I have no right to expect more than their reality. I thought them ethereal, above men. I find them perhaps equal—great by comparison is very small. Insult may be inflicted in more ways than by word or action. One who is tender of being insulted does not like to think an insult against another. I do not like to think insult in a lady's company. I commit a crime with her which absence would not have known. Is it not extraordinary?—when among men, I have no evil thoughts, no malice, no spleen; I feel free to speak or to be silent; I can listen, and from everyone I can learn; my hands are in my pockets, I am free from all suspicion, and comfortable. When I am among women, I have evil thoughts, malice, spleen; I cannot speak, or be silent; I am full of suspicions, and therefore listen to nothing; I am in a hurry to be gone. You must be charitable, and put all this perversity to my being disappointed since my boyhood. Yet with such feelings I am happier alone, among crowds of men, by myself, or with a friend or two. With all this, trust me, I have not the least idea that men of different feelings and inclinations are more short-sighted than myself. I never rejoiced more than at my brother's marriage, and shall do so at that of any of my friends. I must absolutely get over this—but how? the only way is to find the root of the evil, and so cure it, "with backward mutterings of dissevering power." That is a difficult thing; for an obstinate prejudice can seldom be produced but from a gordian complication of feelings, which must take time to unravel, and care to keep unravelled. I could say a good deal about this, but I will leave it, in the hopes of better and more worthy disposi-

tions—and, also, content that I am wronging no one, for, after all, I do think better of womankind than to suppose they care whether Mister John Keats, five feet high, likes them or not. You appeared to wish to know my moods on this subject; don't think it a bore, my dear fellow—it shall be my Amen.

I should not have consented to myself, these four months, tramping in the Highlands, but that I thought it would give me more experience, rub off more prejudice, use [me] to more hardship, identify finer scenes, load me with grander mountains, and strengthen more my reach in poetry, than would stopping at home among books, even though I should reach Homer. By this time I am comparatively a mountaineer; I have been among wilds and mountains too much to break out much about their grandeur. I have fed upon oat-cake not long enough to be very much attached to it. The first mountains I saw, though not so large as some I have since seen, weighed very solemnly upon me. The effect is wearing away, yet I like them mainly. We have come this evening with a guide—for without was impossible—into the middle of the Isle of Mull, pursuing our cheap journey to Iona, and perhaps Staffa. We would not follow the common and fashionable mode, from the great imposition of expense. . . .

You say I must study Dante: well, the only books I have with me are those three little volumes. I read that fine passage you mention a few days ago. Your letter followed me from Hampstead to Port Patrick, and thence to Glasgow. You must think me, by this time, a very pretty fellow. . . . Brown keeps on writing volumes of adventure to Dilke. When we get in of an evening, and I have perhaps taken my rest on a couple of chairs, he affronts my indolence and luxury, by pulling out of his knapsack, first, his paper; secondly, his pens; and lastly, his ink. Now I would not care if he would change a little. I say now, why not, Bailey, take out his pens first sometimes. But I might as well tell a hen to hold up her head before she drinks, instead of afterwards.

Your affectionate friend,

John Keats.

[Æt. 22] To Mr. Hessey

["A SEVERE CRITIC ON HIS OWN WORKS"]

9th Oct., 1818

My dear Hessey,

You are very good in sending me the letter from the Chronicle, and I am very bad in not acknowledging such a kindness sooner: pray forgive me. It has so chanced that I have had that paper every day. I have seen to-day's. I cannot but feel indebted to those gentlemen who have taken my part. As for the rest, I begin to get a little acquainted with my own strength and weakness. Praise or blame has but a momentary effect on the man whose love of beauty in the abstract makes him a severe critic on his own works. My own domestic criticism has given me pain without comparison beyond what "Blackwood" or the "Quarterly" could possibly inflict: and also when I feel I am right, no external praise can give me such a glow as my own solitary reperception and ratification of what is fine. J. S. is perfectly right in regard to the "slip-shod Endymion." That it is so is no fault of mine. No! though it may sound a little paradoxical, it is as good as I had power to make it by myself. Had I been nervous about its being a perfect piece, and with that view asked advice, and trembled over every page, it would not have been written; for it is not in my nature to fumble. I will write independently. I have written independently *without judgment.* I may write independently, and *with judgment,* hereafter. The Genius of Poetry must work out its own salvation in a man. It cannot be matured by law and precept, but by sensation and watchfulness in itself. That which is creative must create itself. In "Endymion" I leaped headlong into the sea, and thereby have become better acquainted with the soundings, the quicksands, and the rocks, than if I had stayed upon the green shore, and piped a silly pipe, and took tea and comfortable advice. I was never afraid of failure; for I would sooner fail than not be among the greatest. But I am nigh getting into a rant; so, with remembrances to Taylor and Woodhouse, &c., I am,

Yours very sincerely,

John Keats.

[Æt. 22]

To Mr. Woodhouse

["I am ambitious of doing the world some good"]

[Postmark, Hampstead, 17 Oct., 1818.]

My dear Woodhous

Your letter gave me great satisfaction, more on account of its friendliness than any relish of that matter in it which is accounted so acceptable in the "genus irritabile." The best answer I can give you is in a clerklike manner to make some observations on two principal points which seem to point like indices into the midst of the whole *pro* and *con* about genius, and views, and achievements, and ambition, *et cætera*. 1st. As to the poetical character itself (I mean that sort, of which, if I am anything, I am a member; that sort distinguished from the Wordsworthian, or egotistical sublime; which is a thing *per se*, and stands alone), it is not itself—it has no self—it is everything and nothing—it has no character—it enjoys light and shade—it lives in gusto, be it foul or fair, high or low, rich or poor, mean or elevated,—it has as much delight in conceiving an Iago as an Imogen. What shocks the virtuous philosopher delights the chameleon poet. It does no harm from its relish of the dark side of things, any more than from its taste for the bright one, because they both end in speculation. A poet is the most unpoetical of anything in existence, because he has no identity; he is continually in for, and filling, some other body. The sun, the moon, the sea, and men and women, who are creatures of impulse, are poetical, and have about them an unchangeable attribute; the poet has none, no identity. He is certainly the most unpoetical of all God's creatures. If, then, he has no self, and if I am a poet, where is the wonder that I should say I would write no more? Might I not at that very instant have been cogitating on the characters of Saturn and Ops? It is a wretched thing to confess, but it is a very fact, that not one word I ever utter can be taken for granted as an opinion growing out of my identical nature. How can it, when I have no nature? When I am in a room with people, if I ever am free from speculating on creations of my own brain, then, not myself goes home to myself,

but the identity of every one in the room begins to press upon me, [so] that I am in a very little time annihilated —not only among men; it would be the same in a nursery of children. I know not whether I make myself wholly understood: I hope enough so to let you see that no dependence is to be placed on what I said that day.

In the second place, I will speak of my views, and of the life I purpose to myself. I am ambitious of doing the world some good: if I should be spared, that may be the work of maturer years—in the interval I will assay to reach to as high a summit in poetry as the nerve bestowed upon me will suffer. The faint conceptions I have of poems to come bring the blood frequently into my forehead. All I hope is, that I may not lose all interest in human affairs—that the solitary indifference I feel for applause, even from the finest spirits, will not blunt any acuteness of vision I may have. I do not think it will. I feel assured I should write from the mere yearning and fondness I have for the beautiful, even if my night's labours should be burnt every morning, and no eye ever shine upon them. But even now I am perhaps not speaking from myself, but from some character in whose soul I now live.

I am sure, however, that this next sentence is from myself. I feel your anxiety, good opinion, and friendship, in the highest degree, and am

Yours most sincerely,
JOHN KEATS.

[Æt. 22]

To George Keats

["I THINK I SHALL BE AMONG THE ENGLISH POETS AFTER MY DEATH"]

Oct. 29, 1818.

My dear George,

. . . I came by ship from Inverness, and was nine days at sea without being sick. A little qualm now and then put me in mind of you; however, as soon as you touch the shore all the horrors of sickness are soon forgotten, as was the case with a lady on board, who could not hold her head up all the way. We had not been into the Thames an hour before her tongue began to some

tune—paying off, as it was fit she should, all old scores. I was the only Englishman on board. There was a downright Scotchman, who, hearing that there had been a bad crop of potatoes in England, had brought some triumphant specimens from Scotland. These he exhibited with natural pride to all the ignorant lightermen and watermen from the Nore to the Bridge. I fed upon beef all the way, not being able to eat the thick porridge which the ladies managed to manage, with large, awkward, horn-spoons into the bargain. Reynolds has returned from a six-weeks' enjoyment in Devonshire; he is well, and persuades me to publish my "Pot of Basil," as an answer to the attack made on me in "Blackwood's Magazine" and the "Quarterly Review." There have been two letters in my defence in the Chronicle, and one in the Examiner, copied from the Exeter paper, and written by Reynolds. I don't know who wrote those in the Chronicle. This is a mere matter of the moment: I think I shall be among the English Poets after my death. Even as a matter of present interest, the attempt to crush me in the "Quarterly" has only brought me more into notice, and it is a common expression among book-men, "I wonder the 'Quarterly' should cut its own throat." It does me not the least harm in society to make me appear little and ridiculous: I know when a man is superior to me, and give him all due respect; he will be the last to laugh at me; and, as for the rest, I feel that I make an impression upon them which ensures me personal respect while I am in sight, whatever they may say when my back is turned.

. . . Tom is rather more easy than he has been, but is still so nervous that I cannot speak to him of you;—indeed it is the care I have had to keep his mind aloof from feelings too acute, that has made this letter so rambling. I did not like to write before him a letter he knew was to reach your hands; I cannot even now ask him for any message; his heart speaks to you.

Be as happy as you can, and believe me, dear Brother and Sister,

Your anxious and affectionate Brother,

JOHN.

This is my birth-day.

[Æt. 23]

To Miss Fanny Brawne

["my uneasy spirits—my unguessed fate"]

Winchester, August 17th [1819].

My dear Girl,—

What shall I say for myself? I have been here four days and not yet written you—'tis true I have had many teasing letters of business to dismiss—and I have been in the claws, like a serpent in an Eagle's, of the last act of our Tragedy. This is no excuse; I know it; I do not presume to offer it. I have no right either to ask a speedy answer to let me know how lenient you are—I must remain some days in a Mist—I see you through a Mist: as I daresay you do me by this time. Believe in the first letters I wrote you: I assure you I felt as I wrote—I could not write so now. The thousand images I have had pass through my brain—my uneasy spirits—my unguessed fate—all spread as a veil between me and you. Remember I have had no idle leisure to brood over you—'tis well perhaps I have not. I could not have endured the throng of jealousies that used to haunt me before I had plunged so deeply into imaginary interests. I would fain, as my sails are set, sail on without an interruption for a Brace of Months longer—I am in complete cue—in the fever; and shall in these four Months do an immense deal. This Page as my eye skims over it I see is excessively unlover-like and ungallant—I cannot help it—I am no officer in yawning quarters; no Parson-Romeo. My Mind is heap'd to the full; stuff'd like a cricket ball—if I strive to fill it more it would burst. I know the generality of women would hate me for this; that I should have so unsoften'd, so hard a Mind as to forget them; forget the brightest realities for the dull imagination of my own Brain. But I conjure you to give it a fair thinking; and ask yourself whether 'tis not better to explain my feelings to you, than write artificial Passion.—Besides, you would see through it. It would be vain to strive to deceive you. 'Tis harsh, harsh, I know it. My heart seems now made of iron—I could not write a proper answer to an invitation to Idalia. You are my Judge: my forehead is on the ground. You seem offended at a little simple innocent childish play-

fulness in my last. I did not seriously mean to say that you were endeavouring to make me keep my promise. I beg your pardon for it. 'Tis but *just* your Pride should take the alarm—*seriously*. You say I may do as I please —I do not think with any conscience I can; my cash resources are for the present stopp'd; I fear for some time. I spend no money, but it increases my debts. I have all my life thought very little of these matters—they seem not to belong to me. It may be a proud sentence; but by Heaven I am as entirely above all matters of interest as the Sun is above the Earth—and though of my own money I should be careless, of my Friends' I must be spare. You see how I go on—like so many strokes of a hammer. I cannot help it—I am impell'd, driven to it. I am not happy enough for silken Phrases, and silver sentences. I can no more use soothing words to you than if I were at this moment engaged in a charge of Cavalry. Then you will say I should not write at all. Should I not? This Winchester is a fine place: a beautiful Cathedral and many other ancient buildings in the Environs. The little coffin of a room at Shanklin is changed for a large room, where I can promenade at my pleasure—looks out onto a beautiful—blank side of a house. It is strange I should like it better than the view of the sea from our window at Shanklin. I began to hate the very posts there—the voice of the old Lady over the way was getting a great Plague. The Fisherman's face never altered any more than our black teapot—the knob however was knock'd off, to my little relief. I am getting a great dislike of the picturesque; and can only relish it over again by seeing you enjoy it. One of the pleasantest things I have seen lately was at Cowes. The Regent in his Yatch (I think they spell it) was anchored opposite—a beautiful vessel—and all the Yatchs and boats on the coast were passing and repassing it; and circuiting and tacking about it in every direction—I never beheld anything so silent, light, and graceful.—As we pass'd over to Southampton, there was nearly an accident. There came by a Boat well mann'd, with two naval officers at the stern. Our Bowlines took the top of their little mast and snapped it off close by the board. Had the mast been a little stouter they would have been upset. In so trifling an event I

could not help admiring our seamen—neither officer nor man in the whole Boat moved a muscle—they scarcely notic'd it even with words. Forgive me for this flint-worded Letter, and believe and see that I cannot think of you without some sort of energy—though mal à propos. Even as I leave off it seems to me that a few more moments' thought of you would uncrystallize and dissolve me. I must not give way to it—but turn to my writing again—if I fail I shall die hard. O my love, your lips are growing sweet again to my fancy—I must forget them. Ever your affectionate

KEATS.

[Æt. 23]

To J. H. REYNOLDS

["THE TOP THING IN THE WORLD"]

WINCHESTER,
August 25, [1819.]

My dear Reynolds,

By this post I write to Rice, who will tell you why we have left Shanklin, and how we like this place. I have indeed scarcely anything else to say, leading so monotonous a life, except I was to give you a history of sensations and day-nightmares. You would not find me at all unhappy in it, as all my thoughts and feelings, which are of the selfish nature, home speculations, every day continue to make me more iron. I am convinced more and more, day by day, that fine writing is, next to fine doing, the top thing in the world; the "Paradise Lost" becomes a greater wonder. The more I know what my diligence may in time probably effect, the more does my heart distend with pride and obstinacy. I feel it in my power to become a popular writer. I feel it in my strength to refuse the poisonous suffrage of a public. My own being, which I know to be, becomes of more consequence to me than the crowds of shadows in the shape of men and women that inhabit a kingdom. The soul is a world of itself, and has enough to do in its own home. Those whom I know already, and who have grown as it were a part of myself, I could not do without; but for the rest of mankind, they are as much a dream to me as Milton's

"Hierarchies." I think if I had a free and healthy and lasting organisation of heart, and lungs as strong as an ox's, so as to be able to bear unhurt the shock of extreme thought and sensation without weariness, I could pass my life very nearly alone, though it should last eighty years. But I feel my body too weak to support me to the height; I am obliged continually to check myself, and be nothing.

It would be vain for me to endeavour after a more reasonable manner of writing to you. I have nothing to speak of but myself, and what can I say but what I feel? If you should have any reason to regret this state of excitement in me, I will turn the tide of your feelings in the right channel, by mentioning that it is the only state for the best sort of poetry—that is all I care for, all I live for. Forgive me for not filling up the whole sheet; letters become so irksome to me, that the next time I leave London I shall petition them all to be spared me. To give me credit for constancy, and at the same time waive letter writing, will be the highest indulgence I can think of. Ever your affectionate friend,

JOHN KEATS.

[Æt. 23]

To J. H. REYNOLDS

["SEASON OF MISTS AND MELLOW FRUITFULNESS"]

WINCHESTER,
22nd Sept., 1819.

My dear Reynolds,

I was very glad to hear from Woodhouse that you would meet in the country. I hope you will pass some pleasant time together; which I wish to make pleasanter by a brace of letters, very highly to be estimated, as really I have had very bad luck with this sort of game this season. I "kepen in solitarinesse," for Brown has gone a-visiting. I am surprised myself at the pleasure I live alone in. I can give you no news of the place here, or any other idea of it but what I have to this effect written to George. Yesterday, I say to him, was a grand day for Winchester. They elected a mayor. It was indeed high time the place should receive some sort of excitement. There was nothing going on—all asleep—not

an old maid's sedan returning from a card-party; and if any old women got tipsy at Christenings they did not expose it in the streets.

The side streets here are excessively maiden-lady-like; the door-steps always fresh from the flannel. The knockers have a staid, serious, nay almost awful quietness about them. I never saw so quiet a collection of lions' and rams' heads. The doors are most part black, with a little brass handle just above the keyhole, so that in Winchester a man may very quietly shut himself out of his own house.

How beautiful the season is now. How fine the air—a temperate sharpness about it. Really, without joking, chaste weather—Dian skies. I never liked stubble-fields so much as now—aye, better than the chilly green of the Spring. Somehow, a stubble plain looks warm, in the same way that some pictures look warm. This struck me so much in my Sunday's walk that I composed upon it.

"Season of mists and mellow fruitfulness," &c.

I hope you are better employed than in gaping after weather. I have been, at different times, so happy as not to know what weather it was. No, I will not copy a parcel of verses. I always somehow associate Chatterton with Autumn. He is the purest writer in the English language. He has no French idiom or particles, like Chaucer; 'tis genuine English idiom in English words. I have given up "Hyperion"—there were too many Miltonic inversions in it—Miltonic verse cannot be written but in an artful, or, rather, artist's humour. I wish to give myself up to other sensations. English ought to be kept up. It may be interesting to you to pick out some lines from "Hyperion," and put a mark, †, to the false beauty, proceeding from art, and one, ‖, to the true voice of feeling. Upon my soul, 'twas imagination; I cannot make the distinction—every now and then there is a Miltonic intonation—but I cannot make the division properly. . . .

Ever your affectionate friend,
JOHN KEATS.

[Æt. 27] THOMAS CARLYLE

1795–1881

To Jane Welsh

[a visit in prospect]

3, Moray Street, [Edin.] 17 April, 1823.

My dear Jane,—

I have not been so glad this month as when Dr. Fyffe poked in his little farthing-face yesterday, with such a look of glad intelligence: I knew he brought me tidings from the East. The Doctor absolutely seemed to me one of the prettiest dapper little gentlemen I had ever set eyes on—the Letter was so large, and he handed it in with such a grace. You cannot think how the Devil had been tempting me about you for the four preceding days: I imagined—But now we have no time for that.

It is but half an instant since I finished this wretched bundle of papers, at the sight of which you are turned so *pall:* "they will yet make you *paller*"—count on that. You must read them all over with the eye not of a friend, but of a *critic:* I must have your voice and decision and advice about twenty things before they go away. Besides I want to secure at least *three* readers—you, myself, and the Printer's devil: more I can do without. The thing is absolutely execrable: I have written as if I had been steeped in Lethe to the chin. "My soul is black as the middle of the night Lady"—or rather gray and heavy as the middle of a Liddesdale mist. But never mind: tear the ugly thing to pieces, and give me your *severe and solid criticism* and counsel, when you arrive.

So you *are* to be here on Saturday. Heaven be thanked for it—I shall see my own Jane yet after all! Do contrive some reading of German or something that will bring us to meet together daily,—do, if it lies within the compass of your utmost ingenuity. You are a good creature and full of wiles: do exert them for me! We are not to leave Town till about the 20th of May after all; I am still free between one o'clock and seven every day: I expect all things from your kindness and never-failing "devices."

Here is an ass come in from Glasgow and I must leave

you. May the Devil comfort him—in his own good time: I had still half an hour to spend with you.

You will let me know the first convenient moment after you arrive. Write to me at any rate, if you cannot see me on Saturday: I shall be very fretful else. Adieu my dearest Jane! God bless you always!

I am ever yours,
THOMAS CARLYLE.

Excuse this haste and nonsense: I have not been so spurred for a twelve-month. There is no hurry in nature with the Books.

What a *preux chevalier* your *Teutscher** was!

[Æt. 29]

To ALEXANDER CARLYLE

["LIFE OF SCHILLER;" LONDON A BABEL AND A WEN]

23 SOUTHAMPTON STREET,
PENTONVILLE, 14th December, 1824.

My dear Alick,—

. . . Your letter found me in due season; and a welcome visitant it was. I had not got the *Courier* that preceded it, and the intelligence of your proceedings and welfare was no small relief to me. You must thank our Mother in my name in the warmest terms for her kind note, which I have read again and again with an attention rarely given to more polished compositions. The sight of her rough true-hearted writing is more to me than the finest penmanship and the choicest rhetoric. It takes me home to honest kindness, and affection that will never fail me. You also I must thank for your graphic picture of Mainhill and its neighbourhood. How many changes happen in this restless roundabout of life within a little space! . . .

In London, or rather in my own small sphere of it, there has nothing sinister occurred since I wrote last. After abundant scolding, which sometimes rose to the very borders of bullying, these unhappy people [the publishers] are proceeding pretty regularly with *the* Book; a fifth part

* An insistent German beggar who had annoyed Miss Welsh.

of it is already printed; they are also getting a portrait of *Schiller* engraved for it; and I hope in about six weeks the thing will be off my hands. It will make a reasonable-looking book; somewhat larger than a volume of *Meister,* and done in somewhat of the same style. In the course of printing I have various matters to attend to; proofs to read; additions, alterations to make; which furnishes me with a very *canny* occupation for the portion of the day I can devote to labour. I work some three or four hours; read, for amusement chiefly, about as long; walk about these dingy streets, and talk with originals for the rest of the day. On the whole I have not been happier for many a long month: I feel content to let things take their turn till I am free of my engagements; and then—for a stern and serious *tuffle* with my Fate, which I have vowed and determined to alter from the very bottom, health and all! This *will not* be impossible, or even I think extremely difficult. Far beyond a million of "weaker vessels" than I are sailing very comfortably along the tide of life just here. What good is it to whine and whimper? Let every man that has an ounce of strength in him get up and put it forth in Heaven's name, and labour that his "soul may live."

Of this enormous Babel of a place I can give you no account in writing: it is like the heart of all the universe; and the flood of human effort rolls out of it and into it with a violence that almost appals one's very sense. Paris scarcely occupies a quarter of the ground, and does not seem to have the twentieth part of the business. O that our father saw Holborn in a fog! with the black vapour brooding over it, absolutely like fluid ink; and coaches and wains and sheep and oxen and wild people rushing on with bellowings and shrieks and thundering din, as if the earth in general were gone distracted. To-day I chanced to pass through Smithfield, when the market was three-fourths over. I mounted the steps of a door, and looked abroad upon the area, an irregular space of perhaps thirty acres in extent, encircled with old dingy brick-built houses, and intersected with wooden pens for the cattle. What a scene! Innumerable herds of fat oxen, tied in long rows, or passing at a trot to their several shambles; and thousands of graziers, drovers, butch-

ers, cattle-brokers with their quilted frocks and long goads pushing on the hapless beasts; hurrying to and fro in confused parties, shouting, jostling, cursing, in the midst of rain and *shairn,* and braying discord such as the imagination cannot figure. Then there are stately streets and squares, and calm green recesses to which nothing of this abomination is permitted to enter. No wonder Cobbett calls the place a Wen. It is a monstrous Wen! The thick smoke of it beclouds a space of thirty square miles; and a million of vehicles, from the dog or cuddy-barrow to the giant waggon, grind along its streets for ever. I saw a six-horse wain the other day with, I think, Number 200,000 and odds upon it!

There is an excitement in all this, which is pleasant as a transitory feeling, but much against my taste as a permanent one. I had much rather visit London from time to time, than live in it. There is in fact no *right* life in it that I can find: the people are situated here like plants in a hot-house, to which the quiet influences of sky and earth are never in their unadulterated state admitted. It is the case with all ranks: the carman with his huge slouch-hat hanging half-way down his back, consumes his breakfast of bread and tallow or hog's lard, sometimes as he swags along the streets, always in a hurried and precarious fashion, and supplies the deficit by continual pipes, and pots of beer. The fashionable lady rises at three in the afternoon, and begins to live towards midnight. Between these two extremes, the same false and tumultuous manner of existence more or less infests all ranks. It seems as if you were for ever in "an inn," the feeling of *home* in our acceptation of the term is not known to one of a thousand. You are packed into paltry shells of brick-houses (calculated to endure for forty years, and then fall); every door that slams to in the street is audible in your most secret chamber; the necessaries of life are hawked about through multitudes of hands, and reach you, frequently adulterated, always at rather more than *twice* their cost elsewhere; people's friends must visit them by rule and measure; and when you issue from your door, you are assailed by vast shoals of quacks, and showmen, and street sweepers, and pickpockets, and mendicants of every degree and shape, all

plying in noise or silent craft their several vocations, all in their hearts like "lions ravening for their prey." The blackguard population of the place is the most consummately blackguard of anything I ever saw.

Yet the people are in general a frank, jolly, *well-living,* kindly people. You get a certain way in their good graces with great ease: they want little more with you than now and then a piece of recreating conversation, and you are quickly on terms for giving and receiving it. Farther, I suspect, their nature or their habits seldom carry or admit them. I have found one or two strange mortals, whom I sometimes stare to see myself beside. There is Crabbe Robinson, an old Templar (Advocate dwelling in the Temple), who gives me coffee and *Sally-Lunns* (a sort of buttered roll), and German books, and talk by the gallon in a minute. His windows look into Alsatia! With the Montagus I, once a week or so, step in and chat away a friendly hour: they are good clever people, though their goodness and cleverness are strangely mingled with absurdity in word and deed. They like me very well: I saw Badams there last night; I am to see him more at large to-morrow or soon after. Mrs. Strachey has twice been here to see me—in her carriage, a circumstance of strange omen to our worthy [friend]. . . . Among the Poets I see Procter and Allan Cunningham as often as I like: the other night I had a second and much longer talk with Campbell. I went over with one Macbeth, not the "Usurper," but a hapless Preacher from Scotland, whose gifts, coupled with their drawbacks, cannot earn him bread in London, though Campbell and Irving and many more are doing all they can for him. Thomas is a clever man, and we had a much more pleasant conversation than our first: but I do not think my view of him was materially altered. He is vain and dry in heart; the brilliancy of his mind (which will not dazzle you to death after all) is like the glitter of an iceberg in the Greenland seas; parts of it are beautiful, but it is cold, cold, and you would rather look at it than touch it. I partly feel for Campbell: his early life was a tissue of wretchedness (here in London he has lived upon a pennyworth of milk and a penny roll per day); and at length his soul has got encrusted as with

a case of iron; and he has betaken himself to sneering and selfishness—a common issue!

Irving I see as frequently and kindly as ever. His church and boy occupy him much. The *madness* of his popularity is altogether over; and he must content himself with playing a much lower game than he once anticipated; nevertheless I imagine he will do much good in London, where many men like him are greatly wanted. His wife and he are always good to me.

Respecting my future movements I can predict nothing certain yet. It is not improbable, I think, that I may see you all in Scotland before many weeks are come and gone. Here at any rate, in my present circumstances, I do not mean to stay: it is expensive beyond measure (two guineas a week or thereby for the mere items of bed and board); and I must have a *permanent* abode of some kind devised for myself, if I mean to do any good. Within reach of Edinburgh or London, it matters little which. You have not yet determined upon leaving or retaining Mainhill? I think it is a pity that you had not some more kindly spot: at all events a better house I *would* have. Is Mainholm let? By clubbing our capitals together we might make something of it. A house in the country, and a horse to ride on, I must and will have if it be possible. Tell me all your views on these things when you write.

. . . Good night! my dear Alick!—I am, ever your affectionate Brother,

T. Carlyle.

[Æt. 33]

To Thomas De Quincey

[life at craigenputtock]

Craigenputtock, 11th December, 1828.

My dear Sir,—

Having the opportunity of a frank, I cannot resist the temptation to send you a few lines, were it only to signify that two well-wishers of yours are still alive in these remote moors, and often thinking of you with the old friendly feelings. My wife encourages me in this innocent purpose: she has learned lately that you were in-

quiring for her of some female friend; nay, even promising to visit us here—a fact of the most interesting sort to both of us. I am to say, therefore, that your presence at this fireside will diffuse no ordinary gladness over all members of the household; that our warmest welcome, and such solacements as even the desert does not refuse, are at any time and at all times in store for one we love so well. Neither is this expedition so impracticable. We lie but a short way out of your direct route to Westmoreland; communicate by gravelled roads with Dumfries and other places in the habitable globe. Were you to warn us of your approach, it might all be made easy enough. And then such a treat it would be to hear the sound of philosophy and literature in the hitherto quite savage wolds, where since the creation of the world no such music, scarcely even articulate speech, had been uttered or dreamed of! Come, therefore, come and see us; for we often long after you. Nay, I can promise, too, that we are almost a unique sight in the British Empire; such a quantity of German periodicals and mystic speculation embosomed in plain Scottish *Peat-moor* being nowhere else that I know of to be met with.

In idle hours we sometimes project founding a sort of colony here, to be called the "Misanthropic Society"; the settlers all to be men of a certain philosophic depth, and intensely sensible of the present state of literature; each to have his own cottage, encircled with roses or thistles as he might prefer; a library and pantry within, and huge stack of turf-fuel without; fenced off from his neighbours by fir woods, and, when he pleased, by cast-metal railing, so that each might feel himself strictly an individual, and free as a son of the wilderness; but the whole settlement to meet weekly over coffee, and there unite in their *Miserere,* or what were better, hurl forth their defiance, pity, expostulation, over the whole universe, civil, literary, and religious. I reckon this place a much fitter site for such an establishment than your Lake Country —a region abounding in natural beauty, but blown on by coach-horns, betrodden by picturesque tourists, and otherwise exceedingly desecrated by too frequent resort; whereas here, though still in communication with the manufacturing world, we have a solitude altogether Dru-

idical—grim hills tenanted chiefly by the wild grouse, tarns and brooks that have soaked and slumbered unmolested since the Deluge of Noah, and nothing to disturb you with speech, except Arcturus and Orion, and the Spirit of Nature, in the heaven and in the earth, as it manifests itself in anger or love, and utters its inexplicable tidings, unheard by the mortal ear. But the misery is the almost total want of colonists! Would *you* come hither and be king over us; *then* indeed we had made a fair beginning, and the "Bog School" might snap its fingers at the "Lake School" itself, and hope to be one day recognised of all men.

But enough of this fooling. Better were it to tell you in plain prose what little can be said of my own welfare, and inquire in the same dialect after yours. It will gratify you to learn that here, in the desert, as in the crowded city, I am moderately active and well; better in health, not worse; and though active only on the small scale, yet in my own opinion honestly, and to as much result as has been usual with me at any time. We have horses to ride on, gardens to cultivate, tight walls and strong fires to defend us against winter; books to read, paper to scribble on; and no man or thing, at least in this visible earth, to make us afraid; for I reckon that so securely sequestered are we, not only would no Catholic rebellion, but even no new Hengist and Horsa invasion, in anywise disturb our tranquillity. True, we have no society; but who has, in the strict sense of that word? I have never had any worth speaking much about since I came into this world: in the next, it may be, they will order matters better. Meanwhile, if we have not the *wheat* in great quantity, we are nearly altogether free from the *chaff,* which often in this matter is highly annoying to weak nerves. My wife and I are busy learning Spanish; far advanced in *Don Quixote* already. I purpose writing mystical *Reviews* for somewhat more than a twelvemonth to come; have Greek to read, and the whole universe to study (for I understand less and less of it); so that here as well as elsewhere I find that a man may *"dree his wierd"* (serve out his earthly apprenticeship) with reasonable composure, and wait what the flight of years may bring him, little disappointed (unless

he is a fool) if it brings him mere *nothing* save what he has already—a body and a soul—more cunning and costly treasures than all Golconda and Potosi could purchase for him. What would the vain worm, man, be at? Has he not a head, to speak of nothing else—a head (be it *with* a hat or without one) full of far richer things than Windsor Palace, or the Brighton Teapot added to it? What are all Dresden picture-galleries and magazines *des arts et des métiers* to the strange painting and thrice wonderful and thrice precious workmanship that goes on under the cranium of a beggar? What *can* be added to him or taken from him by the hatred or love of all men? The grey paper or the white silk paper in which the gold ingot is wrapped; the gold is inalienable; *he* is the gold. But truce also to this moralising. I had a thousand things to ask concerning you: your employments, purposes, sufferings and pleasures. Will you not write to me? will you not come to me and tell? Believe it, you are well loved here, and none feels better than I what a spirit is for the present eclipsed in clouds. For the present it can only be; time and chance are for all men; that troublous season will end; and one day with more joyful, not deeper or truer regard, I shall see you "yourself again." Meanwhile, pardon me this intrusion; and write, if you have a vacant hour which you would fill with a good action. Mr. Jeffery [*sic*] is still anxious to know you; has he ever succeeded? We are not to be in Edinburgh, I believe, till spring; but I will send him a letter to you (with your permission) by the first conveyance. Remember me with best regards to Professor Wilson and Sir W. Hamilton, neither of whom must forget me; not omitting the honest Gordon, who I know will not.

The bearer of this letter is Henry Inglis, a young gentleman of no ordinary talent and worth, in whom, as I believe, *es steckt gar viel.* Should he call himself, pray let this be an introduction, for he reverences all spiritual worth, and you also will learn to love him.—With all friendly sentiments, I am ever, my dear sir, most faithfully yours,

T. Carlyle.

[Æt. 38]

To Dr. Carlyle

[SETTLING DOWN AT CHELSEA]

Cheyne Row, Chelsea, London,
17th June, 1834.

My dear Brother,—

. . . You can fancy what weary lonesome wanderings I had, through the dusty suburbs, and along the burning streets, under a fierce May sun with East wind; "seeking through the nation for some habitation!" At length Jane sent me comfortable tidings of innumerable difficulties overcome; and finally (in, I think, the fourth week) arrived herself; with the Furniture all close following her, in one of Pickford's Track-boats. I carried her to certain of the hopefullest-looking Houses I had fallen in with, and a toilsome time we anew had: however, it was not long; for, on the second inspection, this old Chelsea mansion pleased very decidedly far better than any other we could see; and, the people also whom it belongs to proving reasonable, we soon struck a bargain, and in three days more (precisely this day week) a Hackney Coach, loaded to the roof and beyond it with luggage and live-passengers, tumbled us all down here about eleven in the morning. By "all" I mean my Dame and myself; Bessy Barnet, who had come the night before; and—little *Chico,* the Canary-bird, who, *multum jactatus,* did nevertheless arrive living and well from Puttock, and even sang violently all the way by sea or land, nay struck up his *lilt* in the very London streets wherever he could see green leaves and feel the free air. There then we sat on three trunks; I, however, with a match-box, soon lit a cigar, as Bessy did a fire; and thus with a kind of cheerful solemnity we took possession by "raising reek," and even dined in an *extempore* fashion, on a box-lid covered with some accidental towel. At two o'clock the Pickfords did arrive; and *then* began the hurly-burly; which even yet has but grown quieter, will not grow quiet, for a fortnight to come. However, two rooms and two bedrooms are now in a partially civilised state; the broken Furniture is mostly mended; I have my

old writing-table again (here) *firm* as Atlas; a large wainscoted drawing-room (which is to be my study) with the "red carpet" tightly spread on it; my Books all safe in Presses; the Belisarius Picture right in front of me over the mantel-piece (most suitable to its new wainscot lodging), and my beloved *Segretario Ambulante* right behind, with the two old Italian Engravings, and others that I value less, dispersed around; and so, opposite the middle of my three windows, with little but huge Scotch elm-trees looking in on me, and in the distance an ivied House, and a sunshiny sky bursting out from genial rain, I sit here already very much at home, and impart to my dear and true Brother a thankfulness which he is sure to share in. We have indeed much reason to be thankful every way.

With the House we are all highly pleased, and, I think, the better, the longer we know it hitherto. I know not if you ever were at Chelsea, especially at Old Chelsea, of which this is portion. It stretches from Battersea Bridge (a queer old wooden structure, where they charge you a halfpenny) along the bank of the River, westward a little way; and eastward (which is our side) some quarter of a mile, forming a "Cheyne Walk" (pronounced *Chainie* walk) of really grand old brick mansions, dating perhaps from Charles II.'s time ("Don Saltero's Coffeehouse" of the Tatler is still fresh and brisk among them), with flagged pavement; carriage-way between two rows of stubborn-looking high old pollarded trees; and then the river with its varied small craft, fast-moving or safe-moored, and the wholesome smell (among the breezes) of sea *tar*. Cheyne Row (or Great Cheyne Row, when we wish to be grand) runs up at right angles from this, has some twenty Houses of the same fashion; Upper Cheyne Row (where Hunt lives) turning *again* at right angles, some stone-cast from this door. Frontwards we have the outlook I have described already (or if we shove out our head, the River is disclosed some hundred paces to the left); backwards, from the ground floor, our own gardenkin (which I with new garden-tools am actually re-trimming every morning), and, from all the other floors, nothing but leafy clumps, and green fields, and

red high-peaked roofs glimmering through them: a most clear, pleasant prospect, in these fresh westerly airs! Of London nothing visible but Westminster Abbey and the topmost dome of St. Paul's; other faint ghosts of spires (one other at least) disclose themselves, as the smoke-cloud shifts; but I have not yet made out what they are. At night we are pure and silent, almost as at Puttock; and the gas-light shimmer of the great Babylon hangs stretched from side to side of our horizon. To Buckingham Gate it is thirty-two minutes of my walking (Allan Cunningham's door about half way); nearly the very same to Hyde-Park Corner, to which latter point we have omnibuses every quarter of an hour (they say) that carry you to the Whitehorse Cellar, or even to Coventry Street, for sixpence; calling for you at the very threshold. Nothing was ever so discrepant in my experience as the Craigenputtock-silence of this House and then the world-hubhub of London and its people into which a few minutes bring you: I feel as if a day spent between the two must be the epitome of a month. . . . The rent is £35; which really seems £10 cheaper than such a House could be had for in Dumfries or Annan. The secret is our old friend, "Gigmanity": Chelsea is unfashionable; it is also reputed unhealthy. The former quality we rather like (for our neighbours still are all polite-living people); the latter we do not in the faintest degree believe in, remembering that Chelsea was once considered the "London Montpelier," and knowing that in these matters now as formerly the Cockneys "know nothing," only rush in masses blindly and sheep-wise. Our worst fault is the want of a good free *rustic* walk, like Kensington Gardens, which are above a mile off: however, we have the "College" or Hospital grounds, with their withered old Pensioners; we have open carriage-ways, and lanes, and really a very pretty route to Piccadilly (different from the omnibus route) through the new Grosvenor edifices, Eaton Square, Belgrave Place, etc.: I have also walked to Westminster Hall by Vauxhall Bridge-end, Millbank, etc.; but the road is squalid, confused, dusty, and detestable, and happily *need* not be returned to. To conclude, we are here on *literary* classical ground, as Hunt

is continually ready to declare and unfold: not a stone-cast from this House Smollett wrote his *Count Fathom* (the house is ruined and we happily do not see it); hardly another stone-cast off, old More entertained Erasmus: to say nothing of Bolingbroke St. John, of Paradise Row, and the Count de Grammont, for in truth we care almost nothing for them. On the whole we are exceedingly content so far; and have reason to be so. I add only that our furniture came with wonderfully *little* breakage, and for less than £20, Annan included; that Jane sold all her odd things to Nanny Macqueen on really fair terms; and that we find new furniture of all sorts exceedingly cheap here, and have already got what we need, or nearly so, for less than our own old good, brought us on the spot. . . .

There is now a word to be said on Economics, and the Commissariat Department. Bookselling is still at its lowest ebb; yet on the whole *better* than I expected to find it. Fraser is the only craftsman I have yet seen: he talks still of *loss* by his Magazine and I think will not willingly employ me much, were I never so ready, at the old rate of writing. He seems a well-intentioned creature; I can really pity him in the place he occupies. I went yesterday with a project of a series of Articles on French Revolution matters; chiefly to be translated from *Mémoires:* but he could not take them, at any rate, or indeed at almost any rate; for he spoke of £10 a sheet as quite a *ransom*. He has got my name (such as it is), and can do better without me. However, he will cheerfully print (for "half-profits," that is, *zero*) a projected Book of mine on the French Revolution; to which accordingly, if no new thing occur, I shall probably very soon with all my heart address myself, in full purpose to do *my best*, and put my name to it. The *Diamond Necklace* Paper his Boy got from me, by appointment, this morning; to be examined whether it *will* make a Book: as an *Article* I shall perhaps hardly think of giving it to him. For, you are to understand, that Radical Review of Mill's, after seeming to be quite abandoned, has now a far fairer chance of getting started: a Sir W. Molesworth, a young man whom I have seen at Buller's

and liked, offers to furnish all the money himself (and can do it, being very rich), and to take no further hand in it, once a Manager that will please Mill is found for it. Mill is to be here to-morrow evening: I think, I must appoint some meeting with Molesworth, and give him my whole views of it, and express my readiness to take a most hearty hold of it; having the prospect of right companions; none yet but Mill and Buller, and such as we may further approve of and add. It seems likely something may come of this. In any other case, Periodical Authorship, like all other forms of it, seems *done* in the economical sense: I think of quite abandoning it; of writing my Book; and then, with such name as it may give me, starting some new course, or courses, to make honest wages by. A poor Fanny Wright (whom we are to hear to-night in Freemason's Hall) goes lecturing over the whole world: before sight, I will engage to lecture twice as well; being, as Glen once said, with great violence, to me, "the *more* gigantic spirit of the two." On the whole, I fear nothing. There are funds here already to keep us going above a year, independently of all incomings: before that we may have seen into much, tried much, and succeeded in somewhat. "God's providence they cannot hinder thee of": that is the thing I always repeat to myself, or know without repeating. . . .

God bless you, dear Brother! *Vale mei memor.*

T. Carlyle.

[Æt. 39]

To Dr. Carlyle

[THE BURNING OF THE "FRENCH REVOLUTION" MS.]

Cheyne Row, Chelsea, London,
23d March, 1835.

My dear Brother,—

Your Letter came in this morning (after sixteen days from Rome); and, to-morrow being post-day, I have shoved my writing-table into the corner, and sit (with my back to the fire and Jane, who is busy sewing at my old jupe of a Dressing-gown), forthwith making answer. It was somewhat longed for; yet I felt, in other respects,

that it was better you had not written sooner; for I had a thing to dilate upon, of a most ravelled character, that was better to be knit up a little first. You shall hear. But do not be alarmed; for it is "neither death nor men's lives": we are all well, and I heard out of Annandale within these three weeks, nay, Jane's Newspaper came with the customary "two strokes," * only five days ago. I meant to write to our Mother last night; but shall now do it to-morrow.

Mill had borrowed that first Volume of my poor *French Revolution* (pieces of it more than *once*) that he might have it all before him, and write down some observations on it, which perhaps I might print as Notes. I was busy meanwhile with Volume Second; toiling along like a *Nigger,* but with the heart of a free Roman: indeed, I know not how it was, I had not felt so clear and independent, sure of myself and of my task for many long years. Well, one night about three weeks ago, we sat at tea, and Mill's short rap was heard at the door: Jane rose to welcome him; but he stood there unresponsive, pale, the very picture of despair; said, half-articulately gasping, that she must go down and speak to "Mrs. Taylor." . . . After some considerable additional gasping, I learned from Mill this fact: that my poor Manuscript, all except some four tattered leaves, was *annihilated!* He had left it out (too carelessly); it had been taken for waste-paper: and so five months of as tough labour as I could remember of, were as good as vanished, gone like a whiff of smoke.—There never in my life had come upon me any other accident of much moment; but this I could not but feel to be a sore one. The thing was *lost,* and perhaps worse; for I had not only forgotten all the structure of it, but the spirit it was written with was past; only the general impression seemed to remain, and the recollection that I was on the whole well satisfied with that, and could now hardly hope to equal it. Mill, whom I had to comfort and speak peace to, remained injudiciously enough till almost midnight, and my poor Dame and I had to sit talking of indifferent matters; and could

* A manner of indicating that "all was well."

not till then get our lament freely uttered. *She* was very good to me; and the thing did not beat us. I felt in general that I was as a little Schoolboy, who had laboriously written out his *Copy* as he could, and was showing it not without satisfaction to the Master: but lo! the Master had suddenly torn it, saying: "No, boy, thou must go and write it *better.*" What could I do but sorrowing go and try to obey. That night was a hard one; something from time to time tying me tight as it were all round the region of the heart, and strange dreams haunting me: however, I was not without good thoughts too that came like healing life into me; and I got it somewhat reasonably crushed down, not abolished, yet subjected to me with the resolution and prophecy of abolishing. Next morning accordingly I wrote to Fraser (who had *advertised* the Book as "preparing for publication") that it was all gone back; that he must not *speak of it* to any one (till it was made good again); finally that he must send me some *better paper,* and also a *Biographie Universelle,* for I was determined to risk ten pounds more upon it. Poor Fraser was very assiduous: I got Bookshelves put up (for the whole House was *flowing* with Books), where the *Biographie* (not Fraser's, however, which was countermanded, but Mill's), with much else stands all ready, much readier than before: and so, having first finished out the Piece I was actually upon, I began *again* at the beginning. Early the day after to-morrow (after a hard and quite novel kind of battle) I count on having the First Chapter on paper a second time, no worse than it was, though considerably different. The bitterness of the business is past therefore; and you must conceive me toiling along in that new way for many weeks to come. As for Mill I must yet tell you the best side of him. Next day after the accident he writes me a passionate Letter requesting with boundless earnestness to be allowed to make the loss good as far as *money* was concerned in it. I answered: Yes, since he so desired it; for in our circumstances it was not unreasonable: in about a week he accordingly transmits me a draft for £200; I had computed that my five months' housekeeping, etc., had cost me £100; which sum therefore and not two hundred was the one,

I told him, I could take. He has been here since then; but has not sent the £100, though I suppose he will soon do it, and so the thing will end,—more handsomely than one could have expected. I ought to draw from it various practical "uses of improvement" (among others not to lend manuscripts again); and above all things try to do the work *better* than it was; in which case I shall never grudge the labour, but reckon it a goodhap.—It really seemed to me a Book of considerable significance; and not unlikely even to be of some interest at present: but that latter, and indeed all economical and other the like considerations had become profoundly indifferent to me; I felt that I was honestly writing down and delineating a World-Fact (which the Almighty had brought to pass in the world); that it was an *honest* work for me, and all men might do and say of it simply what seemed good to *them*.—Nay I have got back my spirits again (after this first Chapter), and hope I shall go on tolerably. I will struggle assiduously to be done with it by the time you are to be looked for (which meeting may God bring happily to pass); and in that case I will cheerfully throw the business down a while, and walk off with you to Scotland; hoping to be ready for the *next* publishing season. —This is my ravelled concern, dear Jack; which you see is in the way to knit itself up again, before I am called to tell you of it. And now for something else. I was for writing to you of it next day after it happened: but Jane suggested, it would only grieve you, till I could say it was in the way towards adjustment; which counsel I saw to be right. Let us hope assuredly that the whole will be for *good*. . . .

Our visitors and visitings are what I cannot give you account of this time: not that they are many; but that the sheet is so near full. One Taylor (Henry Taylor, who has written a *Philip van Artevelde*, a good man, whose *laugh* reminds me of poor Irving's) invited me to meet Southey some weeks ago. I went and met Southey. A man of clear brown complexion, large nose, *no* chin, or next to none; care-lined and thought-lined brow, vehement hazel eyes; huge mass of white hair surmounting it; a strait-laced, limited, well-instructed, well-condi-

tioned, excessively sensitive even irritable-looking man. His irritability I think is his grand spiritual feature; as his grand bodily is perhaps leanness and long legs: a nervous female might shriek when he rises for the first time, and stretches to such unexpected length—like a lean pair of tongs! We parted good friends; and may meet again, or not meet, as Destiny orders. At the same house, since that, Jane and I went to meet Wordsworth. I did not expect much; but got mostly what I expected. The old man has a fine shrewdness and naturalness in his expression of face (a long Cumberland figure); one finds also a kind of *sincerity* in his speech: but for prolixity, thinness, endless dilution it excels all the other speech I had heard from mortal. A genuine man (which is much), but also essentially a *small* genuine man: nothing perhaps is sadder (of the glad kind) than the *unbounded* laudation of such a man; sad proof of the *rarity* of such. I fancy, however, he has fallen into the garrulity of age, and is not what he was: also that his environment (and rural Prophethood) has hurt him much. He seems impatient that even Shakespeare should be admired: "so much out of my own pocket!" The shake of hand he gives you is feckless, egoistical; I rather fancy he *loves* nothing in the world so much as one could wish. When I compare that man with a great man,—alas, he is like dwindling into a contemptibility; Jean Paul (for example), neither was he *great,* could have worn him as a finger-ring. However, when "I go to Cumberland," Wordsworth will still be a glad sight.—I have not been fortunate in my Pen to-night; indeed for the last page I have been writing with the back of it. This and my speed will account for the confusion. Porridge has just come in. I will to bed without writing more; and finish tomorrow. Good night, dear Brother!—Ever yours! . . .

[Æt. 41]

To John Carlyle

[lecturing; a postscript by jane welsh carlyle]

Chelsea, May 30, 1837.

As to the lectures the thing went off not without effect, and I have great cause to be thankful I am so handsomely quit of it. The audience, composed of mere quality and notabilities, was very humane to me. They seemed indeed to be not a little astonished at the wild Annandale voice which occasionally grew high and earnest. In these cases they sate as still under me as stones. I had, I think, two hundred and odd. The pecuniary net result is 135 l., the expenses being great; but the ulterior issues may be less inconsiderable. It seems possible I may get into a kind of way of lecturing, or otherwise speaking direct to my fellow-creatures, and so get delivered out of this awful quagmire of difficulties in which you have so long seen me struggle and wriggle. Heaven be thanked that it is done this time so tolerably, and we here still alive. I hardly ever in my life had such a moment as that of the commencement when you were thinking of me at Rome. My printers had only ceased the day before. I was wasted and fretted to a thread. My tongue, let me drink as I would, continued dry as charcoal. The people were there; I was obliged to tumble in and start. *Ach Gott!* But it was got through, and so here we are. Our mother was *black-baised,* though I had written to her to be only *white-baised.* But she read the notice in the "Times," and "wept," she tells me, and again read it. Jane went to the last four lectures and did not faint.

And now I am delving in the garden to compose myself, and meaning to have things leisurely settled up here, and then start for Scotland. I should much approve of your scheme of our going all in a body. Indeed I have tried it every way, but it will not do. Quiet observation forces on me the conclusion that Jane and her mother *cannot* live together. Very sad and miserable, you will say. Truly, but so it is; and I am further bound to say that the chief blame does verily not lie at our side of the house. Nay, who would be in haste to lay any blame anywhere? But poor Mrs. Welsh, with literally the best

intentions, is a person you cannot live with peaceably on any other terms I could ever discover than those of disregarding altogether the whims, emotions, caprices, and conclusions she takes up chameleonlike by the thousand daily. She and I do very well together on these terms: at least I do. But Jane and she cannot live so. Mrs. Welsh seems to think of going off home in a short time. Jane prefers being left here, and thinks that she could even do better without the perpetual pouting and fretting she is tried with.

My own health is not fundamentally hurt. Rest will cure me. I must be a toughish kind of a lath after all; for my life here these three years has been sore and stern, almost frightful; nothing but eternity beyond it, in which seemed any peace. Perhaps better days are now beginning. God be thanked we can still do without such; still and always if so it be. . . . I grow better daily; I delve, as you heard; I walk much, generally alone through the lanes and parks; I have lived much alone for a long time, refusing to go anywhere; finding no pleasure in going anywhere or speaking with anyone.

[By Mrs. Carlyle]

P.S. I do not find that my husband has given you any adequate notion of the success of his lectures; but you will make large allowance for the known modesty of the man. Nothing that he has ever tried seems to me to have carried such conviction to the public heart that he is a real man of genius, and worth being kept alive at a moderate rate. Lecturing were surely an easier profession than authorship. We shall see. My cough is quite gone, and there is no consumption about me at present. I expect to grow strong, now that he has nothing more to worry him.

[Æt. 42]

To Emerson *

[weariness; sterling; emerson's "clear high melody"]

Chelsea, London, 8 December, 1837.

My dear Emerson,—

How long it is since you last heard of me I do not very accurately know; but it is too long. A very long, ugly, inert, and unproductive chapter of my own history seems to have passed since then. Whenever I delay writing, be sure matters go not well with me; and do you in that case write to me, were it again and over again—unweariable in pity.

I did go to Scotland, for almost three months; leaving my Wife here with her Mother. The poor Wife had fallen so weak that she gave me real terror in the spring-time, and made the Doctor look very grave indeed: she continued too weak for travelling: I was worn out as I had never in my life been. So, on the longest day of June, I got back to my Mother's cottage; threw myself down, I may say, into what we may call the "frightfulest *magnetic sleep,*" and lay there avoiding the intercourse of men. Most wearisome had their gabble become; almost unearthly. But indeed all was unearthly in that humour. The gushing of my native brooks, the *sough* of the old solitary woods, the great roar of old native Solway (billowing fresh out of your Atlantic, drawn by the Moon): all this was a kind of unearthly music to me; I cannot tell you how unearthly. It did not bring me to rest; yet *towards* rest I do think: at all events, the time had come when I behoved to quit it again. I have been here since September: evidently another little "chapter" or paragraph, *not* altogether inert, is getting forward. But I must not speak of these things. How can I speak of them on a miserable scrap of blue paper? Looking into your kind eyes with my eyes, I could speak: not here. Pity me, my friend, my brother; yet hope well of me: if I can (in all senses) *rightly hold my peace,* I think much will yet be well with me. SILENCE is the great

* For Emerson's reply, see p. 261.

thing I worship at present; almost the sole tenant of my Pantheon. Let a man know rightly how to hold his peace. I love to repeat to myself, "Silence is of Eternity." Ah me, I think how I could rejoice to quit these jarring discords and jargonings of Babel, and go far, far away! I do believe, if I had the smallest competence of money to get "food and warmth" with, I would shake the mud of London from my feet, and go and bury myself in some green place, and never print any syllable more. Perhaps it is better as it is.

But quitting this, we will actually speak (under favor of "Silence") one very small thing; a pleasant piece of news. There is a man here called John Sterling (*Reverend* John of the Church of England too), whom I love better than anybody I have met with, since a certain sky-messenger alighted to me at Craigenputtock, and vanished in the Blue again. This Sterling has written; but what is far better, he has lived, he is alive. Across several unsuitable wrappages, of Church-of-Englandism and others, my heart loves the man. He is one, and the best, of a small class extant here, who, nigh drowning in a black wreck of Infidelity (lighted up by some glare of Radicalism only, now growing *dim* too) and about to perish, saved themselves into a Coleridgian Shovel-hattedness, or determination to *preach,* to preach peace, were it only the spent *echo* of a peace once preached. He is still only about thirty; young; and I think will shed the shovel-hat yet perhaps. Do you ever read *Blackwood?* This John Sterling is the "New Contributor" whom Wilson makes such a rout about, in the November and prior month: "Crystals from a Cavern," &c., which it is well worth your while to see. Well, and what then, cry you? —Why then, this John Sterling has fallen overhead in love with a certain Waldo Emerson; that is all. He saw the little Book *Nature* lying here; and, across a whole *silva silvarum* of prejudices, discerned what was in it; took it to his heart,—and indeed into his pocket; and has carried it off to Madeira with him; whither unhappily (though now with good hope and expectation) the Doctors have ordered him. This is the small piece of pleasant news, that two sky-messengers (such they were both of them to me) have met and recognized each

other; and by God's blessing there shall one day be a trio of us: call you that nothing?

And so now by a direct transition I am got to the *Oration*. My friend! you know not what you have done for me there. It was long decades of years that I had heard nothing but the infinite jangling and jabbering, and inarticulate twittering and screeching, and my soul had sunk down sorrowfull, and said there is no articulate speaking then any more, and thou art solitary among stranger-creatures, and lo, out of the West comes a clear utterance, clearly recognizable as a *man's* voice, and I *have* a kinsman and brother: God be thanked for it! I could have *wept* to read that speech; the clear high melody of it went tingling through my heart; I said to my wife, "There, woman!" She read; and returned, and charges me to return for answer, "that there had been nothing met with like it since Schiller went silent." My brave Emerson! And all this has been lying silent, quite tranquil in him, these seven years, and the "vociferous platitude" dinning his ears on all sides, and he quietly answering no word; and a whole world of Thought has silently built itself in these calm depths, and, the day being come, says quite softly, as if it were a common thing, "Yes, I *am* here too." Miss Martineau tells me, "Some say it is inspired, some say it is mad." Exactly so; no *say* could be suitabler. But for you, my dear friend, I say and pray heartily: May God grant you strength; for you have a *fearful* work to do! Fearful I call it; and yet it is great, and the greatest. O for God's sake *keep yourself still quiet!* Do not hasten to write; you cannot be too slow about it. Give no ear to any man's praise or censure; know that that is *not* it: on the one side is as Heaven if you have strength to keep silent, and climb unseen; yet on the other side, yawning always at one's right-hand and one's left, is the frightfulest Abyss and Pandemonium! See Fenimore Cooper;—poor Cooper, he is *down in it;* and had a climbing faculty too. Be steady, be quiet, be in *no* haste; and God speed you well! My space is done.

And so adieu, for this time. You must write soon again. My copy of the *Oration* has never come: how is this? I could dispose of a dozen well.—They say I

am to lecture again in Spring, *Ay de mi!* The "Book" is babbled about sufficiently in several dialects. Fraser wants to print my scattered Reviews and Articles; a pregnant sign. Teufelsdröckh to precede. The man "screamed" once at the name of it in a very musical manner. He shall not print a line; unless he gives me *money* for it, more or less. I have had enough of printing for one while,—thrown into "magnetic sleep" by it! Farewell my brother.

T. Carlyle.

[Æt. 45]

To Henry W. Longfellow

["the infinite hubbub of cockney thoughts"]

Chelsea, London, December, 1840.

My dear Sir,—

About two weeks ago arrived your letter. . . . From you, since the morning when we parted at the end of Leigh Hunt's Row, some fitful reports and notices have reached me; one in particular which, I remember, frightened us all,—the rumour that you were in that fatal steamer where so many perished! Happily, this was soon contradicted; and about the same time there came an indistinct message that a copy of your Poems had been left for me at Fraser, the bookseller's. It now beckons to me from one of my shelves, asking always, When wilt thou have a cheerful vacant day? . . .

Alas, my dear sir, what a wretched scrawl is this, with the worst of pens; time, composure, and all elements of social intercourse entirely denied me! It is a hideous, immeasurable treadmill, this smoky soul-confusing Babylon; I address one prayer to the heavens that I were well out of it, before it take the life from me! Happy you who sit in Cambridge, Old or New, with clear air around you, with liberty to commune with your own thoughts, not compulsion to commune with the infinite hubbub of Cockney thoughts and no-thoughts, which—*mag der Teufel holen!* But, patience! we must have patience, and shuffle the cards.

Adieu, dear sir, and Good be with you ever.

Yours most truly,

T. Carlyle.

To Thomas Carlyle

["your friendship restored me to myself"]

Haddington, 11th November, 1822.

My dear Friend,—

If ever I succeed in distinguishing myself above the common herd of little Misses, thine will be the honour of my success. Repeatedly have your salutary counsels and little well-timed flatteries roused me from inactivity when my own reason was of no avail. Our meeting forms a memorable epoch in my history; for my acquaintance with you has from its very commencement powerfully influenced my character and life. When you saw me for the first time, I was wretched beyond description: grief at the loss of the only being* I ever loved with my whole soul had weakened my body and mind; distraction of various kinds had relaxed my habits of industry; I had no counsellor that could direct me, no friend that understood me; the pole-star of my life was lost, and the world looked a dreary blank. Without plan, hope, or aim, I had lived two years when my good Angel sent you hither. I had never heard the language of talent and genius but from my Father's lips; I had thought that I should never hear it more. You spoke like him; your eloquence awoke in my soul the slumbering admirations and ambitions that *His* first kindled there. I wept to think the mind he had cultivated with such anxious, unremitting pains, was running to desolation; and I returned with renewed strength and ardour to the life that he had destined me to lead. But in my studies I have neither the same pleasures, nor the same motives as formerly: I am *alone,* and no one loves me better for my industry. This solitude together with distrust of my own talents despair of ennobling my character, and the discouragement I meet with in devoting myself to a literary life, would, I believe, have oftener than once thrown me into a state of helpless despondency, had not your friendship restored me to myself by supplying (in

* Her father.

as much as they can ever be supplied) the counsels and incitements I have lost.—You see I am not insensible to the value of your friendship, or likely to throw it away, tho' you have sometimes charged me with inconstancy and caprice.

[Æt. 22]

To Thomas Carlyle

[RECONCILIATION; AVOIDING CALLERS]

Haddington, Sunday, 14 March, 1824.

Dearest,—

I looked for your Letter on Monday, as my reward for a week's diligence, and I was not disappointed. It is very good of you to write me such charming long Letters when you are over head and ears in business. Indeed I can never wonder enough at your kindness to me in all things; it is really very affecting! God grant that some day or other, I may deserve it! This hope is the only thing that keeps me from quarrelling with myself outright, when I think of all my demerits in the time past. I declare I am very much of Mr. Kemp's way of thinking, that "certain persons are possessed of Devils even in the present time!" Nothing less than a Devil (I am sure) could have tempted me to torment you and myself, as I did on that unblessed day. Woe to me then, if I had had any other than the most constant and generous of mortal men to deal with. Blessings on your equanimity and magnanimity! You are a dear good patient *Genius.* You are sure you forgive me? forgive me in the very core of your heart? I would rather pay you another dozen of *shillings* than that you should bear me the smallest grudge.

For the first time these great many months I am not ashamed to tell you how I have been living. For *two whole weeks* I have rigidly adhered to my new system. It will answer well I find. By the help of the Lord I have been upon my feet every morning by half after seven, and throughout the day I have not suffered anything or anybody to interfere with my tasks. Indeed it will be all my own fault if I relapse into idleness in my present circumstances: for there are very few ob-

stacles and no temptations at all, in the way of my industry. . . .

To avoid those who are still in the practice of breaking in upon us before one o'clock, I have excogitated an expedient for which I think I deserve some credit. While my Mother was *colded* we got into a way of breakfasting in her dressingroom, and finding that this arrangement, by which two pairs of stairs and a great many wooden doors are interposed between me and my enemies, contributed very considerably to my security, I managed to have it continued after my Mother got well again. I was still liable, however, to be sent for to the diningroom, and must then either have complied or have irritated my Mother by a point blank refusal. The way I have fallen upon to avoid this inconvenience, is the simplest that can well be imagined; and nevertheless it has hitherto proved effectual. When I get up in the morning I merely dash the sleep out of my eyes with cold water, comb up my hair, and whip on my dressinggown, taking care never to dress myself till after one o'clock. As my Mother discovers no deeper motive in this proceeding than laziness or perhaps *economy,* she does not at all object to it. And now, observe, when anyone comes, she knows well enough that I am not *fit to be seen,* and so does not make any attempt to produce me.—My paper is almost filled, and I have still a great many things to say to you; but as my affection for you is great, I cannot find in my heart to cross such writing as this, and will keep them all till another opportunity. When shall I have more of *Meister?* I do not know yet what to think of it. I cannot separate your interest in it from Goethe's or my own opinion of it from what is likely to be the opinion of the public. I wish however, it had not been so—*queer.* My Mother sends her best regards. She was *highly pleased* with your last Letter. Depend upon it, my Friend, it is for the good of us both that she is admitted into our correspondence. So *remember!* no *darlings* or anything *of that nature,—in English;* but never mind that: my heart supplies them for you, wherever they can be *crammed* in. When will you write? On Tuesday, at farthest.—God bless you ever!

Devotedly yours, JANE WELSH.

[Æt. 22]

To Thomas Carlyle

["hope deferred"; lord byron]

Haddington, 20th May, 1824.

In the name of Heaven why don't you write to me? I have waited day after day in the utmost impatience; and hope deferred has not only made my heart sick, but is like to drive me out of my judgement.

For Godsake write the instant this reaches you, if you have not done it before. I shall learn no lesson, settle to no occupation, till I have your Letter. Wretch! You cannot conceive what anxiety I am in about you. One moment I imagine you ill or in trouble of some sort; the next tired of me; the next something else as bad. In short there is no end to my imaginings.

I do not think that in the whole course of our correspondence so long an interval has ever elapsed before: never but when we quarrelled—and this time there is no quarrel! To add to my perplexities, there have I had a Letter from that stupendous Ass the Orator,* telling me such nonsensical things; and among the rest, that he is full of joy because Thomas Carlyle is to be with him this month! Can he mean you? This month! and twenty days of it already past and gone! The man must have been delirious when he wrote such an impossible story. You can never, never mean to be in London this month! You promised to be here before you went, in words that it would be impiety to doubt. I have looked forward to your coming for weeks. You cannot dream of disappointing me!

What I would give to be assured this moment that excessive occupation is the sole cause of your present neglectfulness: that "devils" are dunning you for the rest of your book, and that you are merely giving yourself all to *Meister* just now that you may the sooner be all for me. Is it not hard? This is the only comfortable conjecture I can form to explain your silence; and yet I can never believe in it for more than a minute at a time. Were I but certain that all is really well,

* Edward Irving.

what a Devil of a rage I would be in with you! Write, write.—I will tell you about my *visit to London,* then; I have no heart for it now. What an idiot I was ever to think that man so estimable! But I am done with his Preachership now and forever.

And Byron is dead! I was told it all at once in a roomful of people. My God, if they had said that the sun or the moon had gone out of the heavens, it could not have struck me with the idea of a more awful and dreary blank in the creation than the words, "Byron is dead!" I have felt quite cold and dejected ever since: all my thoughts have been fearful and dismal. I wish you was come.

Yours forever affectionately,
JANE WELSH.

[Æt. 25]

To MRS. GEORGE WELSH

["ONE WHO HOLDS HIS PATENT OF NOBILITY FROM ALMIGHTY GOD"]

TEMPLAND, 1st October, 1826.

My dear Mrs. Welsh,—

. . . It were no news to tell you what a momentous matter I have been busied with; "not to know *that* would argue yourself unknown." For a marriage is a topic suited to the capacities of all living; and, in this, as in every known instance, has been made the most of. But, for as much breath as has been wasted on "my *Situation,*" I have my own doubts whether they have given you any *right* idea of it. They would tell you, I should suppose, first and foremost, that my Intended is *poor.* (for *that* it requires no great depth of sagacity to discover), and, in the next place, most likely, indulge in some criticisms scarce flattering, on his birth (the more likely, if their own birth happened to be mean or doubtful); and, if they happened to be vulgar-fine people with disputed pretensions to good looks, they would, to a certainty, set him down as unpolished and ill-looking. But a hundred chances to one, they would not tell you he is among the cleverest men of his day; and not the cleverest only but the most enlightened! that he possesses all the qualities I deem essential in *my* Husband, a warm true heart to

love me, a towering intellect to command me, and a spirit of fire to be the guiding star of my life. Excellence of this sort always requires some degree of superiority in those who duly appreciate it: in the eyes of the *canaille*—poor soulless wretches!—it is mere foolishness, and it is only the canaille who babble about other people's affairs.

Such then is this future Husband of mine; not a *great* man according to the most common sense of the word, but truly great in its natural, proper sense; a scholar, a poet, a philosopher, a wise and noble man, one who holds his patent of nobility from Almighty God, and whose high stature of manhood is not to be measured by the inch-rule of Lilliputs!—Will you like him? No matter whether you do or not—since I like him in the deepest part of my soul. I would invite you to my wedding, if I meant to invite any one; but, to *my* taste, such ceremonies cannot be *too* private: besides by making distinctions among my relatives on the occasion, I should be sure to give offence; and, by God's blessing, I will have no one there who does not feel kindly both towards *him* and *me*. . . .

[Æt. 44]

To Thomas Carlyle

[an evening party]

Liverpool, Saturday, Aug. 16, 1845.

Dearest,—

I never know whether a letter is welcomer when it arrives after having been impatiently waited for, or like yesterday's, "quite promiscuously," when I was standing "on the broad basis" of, "Blessed are they who do not hope, for they shall not be disappointed!" I assure you I am the only person obliged by your writing; it makes a very palpable difference in my amiability throughout the day whether I have a letter to begin it with.

Last night we went, according to programme, to Mrs. A——'s, and "it is but fair to state" that the drive there and back in the moonlight was the best of it. The party did me no ill, however; it was not a Unitarian crush like the last, but adapted to the size of the room: select,

moreover, and with the crowning grace of an open window. There was an old gentleman who did the impossible to inspire me with a certain respect; Y—— they called him, and his glory consists in owning the Prince's Park, and throwing it open to "poors." Oh, what a dreadful little old man! He plied me with questions, and suggestions about you, till I was within a trifle of putting "my finger in the pipy o' 'im." "How did Mr. Carlyle treat Oliver Cromwell's crimes?" "His what?" said I. "The atrocities he exercised on the Irish." "Oh, you mean massacring a garrison or two? All that is treated very briefly." "But Mr. Carlyle must feel a just horror of that." "Horror? Oh, none at all, I assure you! He regards it as the only means under the circumstances to save bloodshed." The little old gentleman bounced back in his chair, and spread out his two hands, like a duck about to swim, while there burst from his lips a groan that made everyone look at us. What had I said to their Mr. Y——? By-and-by my old gentleman returned to the charge. "Mr. Carlyle must be feeling much delighted about the Academical Schools?" "Oh, no! he has been so absorbed in his own work lately that he has not been at leisure to be delighted about anything?" "But, madam! a man may attend to his own work, and attend at the same time to questions of great public interest." "Do you think so? I don't." Another bounce on the chair. Then, with a sort of awe, as of a "demon more wicked than your wife": "Do you not think, madam, that more good might be done by taking up the history of the actual time than of past ages? Such a time as this, so full of improvements in arts and sciences, the whole face of Europe getting itself changed! Suppose Mr. Carlyle should bring out a yearly volume about all this?" This was Y——'s last flight of eloquence with me, for catching the eyes of a lady (your Miss L—— of "The Gladiator") fixed on me with the most ludicrous expression of sympathy, I fairly burst out laughing till the tears ran down; and when I had recovered myself, the old gentleman had turned for compensation to J. M——. J. had reasons for being civil to him which I had not, Mr. Y—— being his landlord; but he seemed to be answering him in his sleep, while his waking

thoughts were intent on an empty chair betwixt Geraldine* and me, and eventually he made it his own. As if to deprecate my confounding him with these Y——'s, he immediately began to speak in the most disrespectful manner of Mechanics' Institutes "and all that sort of thing"; and then we got on these eternal Vestiges of Creation, which he termed, rather happily, "animated mud." Geraldine and Mrs. Paulet were wanting to engage him in a doctrinal discussion, which they are extremely fond of: "Look at Jane," suddenly exclaimed Geraldine, "she is quizzing us in her own mind. You must know" (to M——) "we cannot get Jane to care a bit about doctrines." "I should think not," said M——, with great vivacity; "Mrs. Carlyle is the most concrete woman that I have seen for a long while." "Oh," said Geraldine, "she puts all her wisdom into practice, and so never gets into scrapes." "Yes," said M—— in a tone "significant of much," "to keep out of doctrines is the only way to keep out of scrapes!" Was not that a creditable speech in a Unitarian?

Miss L—— is a frank, rather agreeable, woman forty or thereabouts, who looks as if she had gone through a good deal of hardship; not "a domineering genius" by any means, but with sense enough for all practical purposes, such as admiring you to the skies, and Cromwell too. The rest of the people were "chiefly musical, Mr. Carlyle." Mrs. A—— is very much fallen off in her singing since last year; I suppose, from squalling so much to her pupils. She is to dine here to-day, and ever so many people besides, to meet these R——'s. Doubtless we shall be "borne through with an honourable throughbearing;" but quietness is best.

And now I must go and walk, while the sun shines. Our weather here is very showery and cold. I heard a dialogue the other morning betwixt Mr. Paulet and his factotum, which amused me much. The factotum was mowing the lawn. Mr. Paulet threw up the breakfast-room window, and called to him: "Knolles! how looks my wheat?" "Very distressed indeed, sir!" "Are we much fallen down?" "No, sir, but we are black, very black."

* Geraldine Jewsbury, the romatic friend of Mrs. Carlyle, who furnished Froude with some of his doubtful material.

"All this rain, I should have thought, would have made us fall down?" "Where the crops are heavy they are a good deal laid, sir, but it would take a vast of rain to lay us!" "Oh, then, Knolles, it is because we are not powerful enough that we are not fallen down?" "Sir?" "It is because we are not rich enough?" "Beg pardon, sir, but I don't quite understand?" Mr. Paulet shut the window and returned to his breakfast. God keep you, dear. Your own

J. C.

[Æt. 44]

To Thomas Carlyle

[dickens as bobadil; tennyson]

Tuesday, Sept. 23, 1845.

"Nothink" for you to-day in the shape of inclosure, unless I inclose a letter from Mrs. Paulet to myself, which you will find as "entertaining" to the full as any of mine. And *nothink* to be told either, except all about the play; and upon my honour, I do not feel as if I had penny-a-liner genius enough, this cold morning, to make much entertainment out of that. Enough to clasp one's hand, and exclaim, like Helen before the Virgin and Child, "Oh, how expensive!" But "how did the creatures get through it?" Too well; and not well enough! The public theatre, scenes painted by Stansfield, costumes "rather exquisite," together with the certain amount of proficiency in the amateurs, overlaid all idea of private theatricals; and, considering it as public theatricals, the acting was "most insipid," not one performer among them that could be called good, and none that could be called absolutely bad. Douglas Jerrold seemed to me the best, the oddity of his appearance greatly helping him; he played Stephen the Cull [Gull]. Forster as Kitely and Dickens as Captain Bobadil were much on a par; but Forster preserved his identity, even through his loftiest flights of Macreadyism; while poor little Dickens, all painted in black and red, and affecting the voice of a man of six feet, would have been unrecognizable for the mother that bore him! On the whole, to get up the smallest interest in the thing, one needed to be always re-

minding oneself: "all these actors were once men!" and will be men again to-morrow morning. The greatest wonder for me was how they had contrived to get together some six or seven hundred ladies and gentlemen (judging from the clothes) at this season of the year; and all utterly unknown to me, except some half-dozen.

So long as I kept my seat in the dress circle I recognized only Mrs. Macready (in one of the four private boxes), and in my nearer neighbourhood Sir Alexander and Lady Gordon. But in the interval betwixt the play and the farce I took a notion to make my way to Mrs. Macready. John, of course, declared the thing "clearly impossible, no use trying it;" but a servant of the theatre, overhearing our debate, politely offered to escort me where I wished; and then John, having no longer any difficulties to surmount, followed, to have his share in what advantages might accrue from the change. Passing through a long dim passage, I came on a tall man leant to the wall, with his head touching the ceiling like a caryatid, to all appearance asleep, or resolutely trying it under most unfavourable circumstances. "Alfred Tennyson!" I exclaimed in joyful surprise. "Well!" said he, taking the hand I held out to him, and forgetting to let it go again. "I did not know you were in town," said I. "I should like to know who you are," said he; "I know that I know you, but I cannot tell your name." And I had actually to name myself to him. Then he woke up in good earnest, and said he had been meaning to come to Chelsea. "But Carlyle is in Scotland," I told him with due humility. "So I heard from Spedding already, but I asked Spedding, would he go with me to see Mrs. Carlyle? and he said he would." I told him if he really meant to come, he had better not wait for backing, under the present circumstances; and then pursued my way to the Macreadys' box; where I was received by William (whom I had not divined) with a "Gracious heavens!" and spontaneous dramatic start, which made me all but answer, "Gracious heavens!" and start dramatically in my turn. And then I was kissed all round by his women; and poor Nell Gwyn, Mrs. M—— G——, seemed almost pushed by the general enthusiasm on the distracted idea of kissing me also! They would not let me return to

my stupid place, but put in a third chair for me in front of their box; "and the latter end of that woman was better than the beginning." Macready was in perfect ecstacies over the "Life of Schiller," spoke of it with tears in his eyes. As "a sign of the times," I may mention that in the box opposite sat the Duke of Devonshire, with Payne Collier! Next to us were D'Orsay and "Milady!"

Between eleven and twelve it was all over—and the practical result? Eight-and-sixpence for a fly, and a headache for twenty-four hours! I went to bed as wearied as a little woman could be, and dreamt that I was plunging through a quagmire seeking some herbs which were to save the life of Mrs. Maurice; and that Maurice was waiting at home for them in an agony of impatience, while I could not get out of the mud-water!

Craik arrived next evening (Sunday), to make his compliments. Helen had gone to visit numbers. John was smoking in the kitchen. I was lying on the sofa, headachey, leaving Craik to put himself to the chief expenditure of wind, when a cab drove up. Mr. Strachey? No. Alfred Tennyson alone! Actually, by a superhuman effort of volition he had put himself into a cab, nay, brought himself away from a dinner party, and was there to smoke and talk with me!—by myself—me! But no such blessedness was in store for him. Craik prosed, and John babbled for his entertainment; and I, whom he had come to see, got scarcely any speech with him. The exertion, however, of having to provide him with tea, through my own unassisted ingenuity (Helen being gone for the evening) drove away my headache; also perhaps a little feminine vanity at having inspired such a man with the energy to take a cab on his own responsibility, and to throw himself on providence for getting away again! He stayed till eleven, Craik sitting him out, as he sat out Lady H——, and would sit out the Virgin Mary should he find her here. . . .

Yours,
J. C.

[Æt. 51]

To Thomas Carlyle

[PLUMBERS, CARPENTERS, AND BRICKLAYERS]

5 Cheyne Row:

Friday night, July 24, 1852.

Oh, my! I wonder if I shall hear to-morrow morning, and what I shall hear! Perhaps that somebody drove you wild with snoring, and that you killed him and threw him in the sea! Had the boatmen upset the boat on the way back, and drowned little Nero and me, on purpose, I could hardly have taken it ill of them, seeing they "were but men, of like passions with yourself." But on the contrary, they behaved most civilly to us, offered to land us at any pier we liked, and said not a word to me about the sixpence, so I gave it to them as a free gift. We came straight home in the steamer, where Nero went immediately to sleep, and I to work.

Miss Wilson called in the afternoon, extremely agreeable; and after tea Ballantyne came, and soon after Kingsley. Ballantyne gave me the ten pounds, and Kingsley told me about his wife—that she was "the adorablest wife man ever had!" Neither of these men stayed long. I went to bed at eleven, fell asleep at three, and rose at six. The two plumbers were rushing about the kitchen with boiling lead; an additional carpenter was waiting for my directions about "the cupboard" at the bottom of the kitchen stair. The two usual carpenters were hammering at the floor and windows of the drawing-room. The bricklayer rushed in, in plain clothes, measured the windows for stone sills (?), rushed out again, and came no more that day. After breakfast I fell to clearing out the front bedroom for the bricklayers, removing everything into your room. When I had just finished, a wild-looking stranger, with a paper cap, rushed up the stairs, three steps at a time, and told me he was "sent by Mr. Morgan to get on with the painting of Mr. Carlyle's bedroom during his absence!" I was so taken by surprise that I did not feel at first to have any choice in the matter, and told him he must wait two hours till all that furniture was taken—somewhere.

Then I came in mind that the window and doors had to be repaired, and a little later that the floor was to be taken up! Being desirous, however, not to refuse the good the gods had provided me, I told the man he might begin to paint in my bedroom; but there also some woodwork was unfinished.

The carpenters thought they could get it ready by next morning. So I next cleared myself a road into your bedroom, and fell to moving all the things of mine up there also. Certainly no lady in London did such a hard day's work. Not a soul came to interrupt me till night, when —— stalked in for half-an-hour, uncommonly dull. "It must have taken a great deal to make a man so dull as that!" I never went out till ten at night, when I took a turn or two on Battersea Bridge, without having my throat cut.

My attempts at sleeping last night were even more futile than the preceding one. A dog howled repeatedly, near hand, in that awful manner which is understood to prognosticate death, which, together with being "in a new position," kept me awake till five. And after six it was impossible to lie, for the plumbers were in the garret, and the bricklayers in the front bedroom! Mr. Morgan came after breakfast, and settled to take up the floor in your bedroom at once. So to-day all the things have had to be moved out again down to my bedroom, and the painter put off; and to-night I am to "pursue sleep under difficulties" in my own bed again. They got on fast enough with the destructive part. The chimney is down and your floor half off!

After tea I "cleaned myself," and walked up to see Miss Farrar. She and her sister were picnicking at Hampton Court; but the old mother was very glad of me, walked half-way back with me, and gave me ice at Gunter's in passing. I am to have a dinner-tea with them next Wednesday. And to-morrow I am to give the last sitting for my picture, and take tea at Mrs. Sketchley's. And now I must go to bed again—more's the pity.

I shall leave this open, in case of a letter from you in the morning.

Saturday.

Thanks God too for some four hours of sleep last night. I don't mind the uproar a bit now that you are out of it.

Love to Mr. Erskine; tell him to write to me.

Ever yours,

[Æt. 55] J. W. C.

To a Friend

[on baking bread]

January 11, 1857.

. . . So many talents are wasted, so many enthusiasms turned to smoke, so many lives split for want of a little patience and endurance, for want of understanding and laying to heart what you have so well expressed in your verses—the meaning of *the Present,*—for want of recognizing that it is not the greatness or littleness of "the duty nearest hand," but the spirit in which one does it, that makes one's doing noble or mean! I can't think how people who have any natural ambition and any sense of power in them, escape going *mad* in a world like this without the recognition of that. I know I was very near mad when I found it out for myself (as one has to find out for one's self everything that is to be of any real practical use to one).

Shall I tell you how it came into my head? Perhaps it may be of comfort to you in similar moments of fatigue and disgust. I had gone with my husband to live on a little estate of *peat bog* that had descended to me all the way down from John Welsh, the Covenanter, who married a daughter of John Knox. *That* didn't, I am ashamed to say, make me feel Craigenputtock a whit less of a peat bog, and a most dreary, untoward place to live at. In fact, it was sixteen miles distant on every side from all the conveniences of life, shops, and even post office. Further, we were very *poor,* and further and worst, being an only child, and brought up to "great prospects," I was sublimely ignorant of every branch of useful knowledge, though a capital Latin scholar and very fair mathematician!!

It behooved me in these astonishing circumstances to learn to sew. Husbands, I was shocked to find, wore their stockings into holes, and were always losing buttons, and

I was expected to "look to all that"; also it behooved me to learn to *cook!* No capable servant choosing to live at such an out-of-the-way place, and my husband having bad digestion, which complicated my difficulties dreadfully. The *bread,* above all, brought from Dumfries, "soured on his stomach" (O heaven!), and it was plainly my duty as a Christian wife to bake at home.

So I sent for Corbett's "Cottage Economy," and fell to work at a loaf of bread. But, knowing nothing about the process of fermentation or the heat of ovens, it came to pass that my loaf got put into the oven at the time that myself ought to have been put into bed; and I remained the only person not asleep in a house in the middle of a desert.

One o'clock struck, and then two, and then three; and still I was sitting there in an immense solitude, my whole body aching with weariness, my heart aching with a sense of forlornness and *degradation.* That I, who had been so petted at home, whose comfort had been studied by everybody in the house, who had never been required to *do* anything but *cultivate my mind,* should have to pass all those hours of the night in watching *a loaf of bread,* —which mightn't turn out bread after all! Such thoughts maddened me, till I laid down my head on the table and sobbed aloud.

It was then that somehow the idea of Benvenuto Cellini sitting up all night watching his Perseus in the furnace came into my head, and suddenly I asked myself: "After all, in the sight of the Upper Powers, what is the mighty difference between a statue of Perseus and a loaf of bread, so that each be the thing one's hand has found to do? The man's determined will, his energy, his patience, his resource, were the really admirable things, of which his statue of Perseus was the mere chance expression. If he had been a woman living at Craigenputtock, with a dyspeptic husband, sixteen miles from a baker, and he a bad one, all of these same qualities would have come out more fitly in a *good* loaf of bread."

I cannot express what consolation this germ of an idea spread over my uncongenial life during the years we lived at that savage place, where my two immediate predecessors had gone *mad,* and the third had taken to *drink.* . .

[Æt. 43]

THOMAS HOOD

1799–1845

To Charles Dickens

[an american friend]

17, Elm Tree Road, London,
Oct. 12th, 1842.

Dear Dickens,

Can you let me have an early copy of the "American Notes," so that I may review it in the "New Monthly"? Is it really likely to be ready as advertised? I aim this at Devonshire Place, supposing you to be returned, for with these winds 'tis no fit time for the coast. But your bones are not so weather unwise (for ignorance *is* bliss) as mine. I should have asked this by word of mouth in Devonshire Place, but the weather has kept me in doors. It is no fiction that the complaint, derived from Dutch malaria seven years since, is revived by Easterly winds. Otherwise I have been better than usual, and "never say die." Don't forget about the Yankee Notes: I never had but one American friend, and lost him thro' *a good crop of pears.* He paid us a visit in England; whereupon in honour of him, a pear tree, which had never borne fruit to speak of within memory of man, was loaded with 90 dozen brown somethings. Our gardener said they were a *keeping* sort, and would be good at Christmas; whereupon, as our Jonathan was on the eve of sailing for the States, we sent him a few dozens to dessert him on the voyage. Some he put at the bottom of a trunk (he wrote to us) to take to America; but he could not have been gone above a day or two, when all our pears began to rot! *His* would, of course, by sympathy, and I presume spoilt his linen or clothes, for I have never heard of him since. Perhaps he thought I had *done* him on purpose, and for sartin the tree, my accomplice, never bore any more pears, good or bad, after that supernatural crop.

Pray present my respects for me to Mrs. Dickens. How she must enjoy being at home and discovering her children, after her Columbusing, and only discovering America.

I am, my dear Dickens,
Yours very truly,
Thomas Hood

Do you want a motto for your book? Coleridge in his Pantisocracy days, used frequently to exclaim in soliloquy, "I wish I was in A-me-ri-ca!" Perhaps you might find something in the advertisements of Oldridge's *"Balm of Columbia,"* or the *"American Soothing Syrup"*—query, Gin twist?

[Æt. 45]

To a Child (May Elliot)

[at the seaside]

Devonshire Lodge, New Finchley Road,
July 1st, 1844.

My dear May,

How do you do, and how do you like the sea? not much perhaps, it's "so big." But shouldn't you like a nice little ocean, that you could put in a pan? Yet the sea, although it looks rather ugly at first, is very useful, and, if I were near it this dry summer, I would carry it all home, to water the garden with at Stratford, and it would be sure to drown all the blights, *May*-flies and all!

I remember that, when I saw the sea, it used sometimes to be very fussy, and fidgetty, and did not always wash itself quite clean; but it was very fond of fun. Have the waves ever run after you yet, and turned your little two shoes into pumps, full of water?

If you want a joke you might push Dunnie into the sea, and then fish for him as they do for a Jack. But don't go in yourself, and don't let the baby go in and swim away, although he *is* the shrimp of the family. Did you ever taste the sea-water? The fishes are so fond of it they keep drinking it all the day long. Dip your little finger in, and then suck it to see how it tastes. A glass of it warm, with sugar and a grate of nutmeg, would quite astonish you! The water of the sea is so saline, I wonder nobody catches salt fish in it. I should think a good way would be to go out in a butter-boat, with a little melted for sauce. Have you been bathed yet in the sea, and were you afraid? I was, the first time, and the time before that; and dear me, how I kicked, and screamed —or, at least, meant to scream, but the sea, ships and

all, began to run into my mouth, and so I shut it up. I think I see *you* being dipped in the sea, screwing your eyes up, and putting your nose, like a button, into your mouth, like a button-hole, for fear of getting another smell and taste! By the bye, did you ever dive your head under water with your legs up in the air like a duck, and try whether you could cry "Quack?" Some animals can! I would try, but there is no sea here, and so I am forced to dip into books. I wish there were such nice green hills here as there are at Sandgate. They must be very nice to roll down, especially if there are no furze bushes to prickle one, at the bottom! Do you remember how the thorns stuck in us like a penn'orth of mixed pins at Wanstead? I have been very ill, and am so thin now, I could stick myself into a prickle. My legs, in particular, are so wasted away, that somebody says my pins are only needles; and I am so weak, I dare say you could push me down on the floor and right through the carpet, unless it was a strong pattern. I am sure, if I were at Sandgate, you could carry me to the post office and fetch my letters. Talking of carrying, I suppose you have donkeys at Sandgate, and ride about on them. Mind and always call them "donkeys," for if you call them asses, it might reach such long ears! I knew a donkey once that kicked a man for calling him Jack instead of John.

There are no flowers, I suppose, on the beach, or I would ask you to bring me a bouquet, as you used at Stratford. But there are little crabs! If you would catch one for me, and teach it to dance the Polka, it would make me quite happy; for I have not had any toys or playthings for a long time. Did you ever try, like a little crab, to run two ways at once? See if you can do it, for it is good fun; never mind tumbling over yourself a little at first. It would be a good plan to hire a little crab, for an hour a day, to teach baby to crawl, if he can't walk, and, if I was his mamma, I *would* too! Bless him! But I must not write on him any more—he is so soft, and I have nothing but steel pens.

And now good bye, Fanny has made my tea, and I must drink it before it gets too hot, as we *all* were last Sunday week. They say the glass was 88 in the shade,

which is a great age! The last fair breeze I blew dozens of kisses for you, but the wind changed, and I am afraid took them all to Miss H—— or somebody that it shouldn't. Give my love to everybody and my compliments to all the rest, and remember, I am, my dear May, your loving friend,

THOMAS HOOD.

P.S. Don't forget my little crab to dance the Polka, and pray write to me as soon as you can't, if it's only a line.

[Æt. 53]

RUFUS CHOATE

1799–1859

TO HIS DAUGHTER

[NEWS ABOUT HIMSELF]

Monday, August, 1853.

Dear Sallie,—

The accompanying letter came to me to-day, and I send it with alacrity. I wish you would study *calligraphy* in it, if what I see not is as well written as what I do. I got quietly home, to a cool, empty house, unvexed of mosquito, sleeping to the drowsy cricket. It lightened a little, thundered still less, and rained half an hour; but the sensation, the consciousness that the Sirian-tartarean summer is really gone—though it is sad that so much of life goes too—is delightful. Next summer will probably be one long April or October. By the way, the dream of the walnut grove and the light-house is finished. They will not sell, and the whole world is to choose from yet. I see and hear nothing of nobody. I bought a capital book to-day by Bungener, called "Voltaire and his Times," fifty pages of which I have run over. He is the author of "Three Sermons under Louis XV.," and is keen, bright, and just, according to my ideas, as far as I have gone. My *course* this week is rudely broken in upon by the vileness and vulgarity of business, and this day has been lean of good books and rich thoughts, turning chiefly on whether charcoal is an animal nuisance, and whether Dr. Manning's will shall stand. Still, Rufus will be glad

to hear I read my Æschines and Cicero and German Martial, and, as I have said, this Bungener.

I wish you would all come home; that is, that your time had arrived. Pick up, dear daughter, health, nerves, and self-trust, and come here to make the winter of our discontent glorious summer.

Thank your dear mother and Rufus for their letters. I hope for Minnie a neck without a crick, and a lot without a crook, if one may be so jinglesome. One of the Choates of Salem called in my absence—if Daniel did not see a *doppelgänger,* in a dream—but which, where he is, what he wants, where he goes, or how he fares, I know not. I would invite him to dine, if I knew where he was. Best love to all. Tell your mother I don't believe I shall write her for two or three days, but give her, and all, my love. I like the court-house prospect and the Bucolical cow, and verdant lawn *much,* as Minnie says. Good-by, all.

R. C.

[Æt. 25]

THOMAS BABINGTON MACAULAY

1800–1859

To his Father

[SYDNEY SMITH]

York, July 21st, 1826.

My dear Father,—

The other day as I was changing my neckcloth, which my wig had disfigured, my good landlady knocked at the door of my bedroom, and told me that Mr. Smith wished to see me, and was in my room below. Of all names by which men are called, there is none which conveys a less determinate idea to the mind than that of Smith. Was he on the circuit? For I do not know half the names of my companions. Was he a special messenger from London? Was he a York attorney coming to be preyed upon, or a beggar coming to prey upon me; a barber to solicit the dressing of my wig, or a collector for the Jews' Society? Down I went, and, to my utter amazement, beheld the Smith of Smiths, Sydney Smith, alias Peter Plymley. I had forgotten his very existence till I dis-

cerned the queer contrast between his black coat and his snow-white head, and the equally curious contrast between the clerical amplitude of his person and the most unclerical wit, whim, and petulance of his eye. I shook hands with him very heartily; and on the Catholic question we immediately fell, regretted Evans, triumphed over Lord George Beresford, and abused the bishops. He then very kindly urged me to spend the time between the close of the Assizes and the commencement of the Sessions at his house; and was so hospitably pressing that I at last agreed to go thither on Saturday afternoon. He is to drive me over again into York on Monday morning. I am very well pleased at having this opportunity of becoming better acquainted with a man who, in spite of innumerable affectations and oddities, is certainly one of the wittiest and most original writers of our times. Ever yours affectionately,

T. B. M.

[Æt. 35]

To Thomas Flower Ellis

[LIFE IN INDIA; READING THE CLASSICS]

Calcutta, May 30th, 1836.

Dear Ellis,—

I have just received your letter dated December 28th. How time flies! Another hot season has almost passed away, and we are daily expecting the beginning of the rains. Cold season, hot season, and rainy season are all much the same to me. I shall have been two years on Indian ground in less than a fortnight, and I have not taken ten grains of solid, or a pint of liquid, medicine during the whole of that time. If I judged only from my own sensations, I should say that this climate is absurdly maligned; but the yellow, spectral figures which surround me serve to correct the conclusions which I should be inclined to draw from the state of my own health.

One execrable effect the climate produces. It destroys all the works of man with scarcely one exception. Steel rusts; razors lose their edge; thread decays; clothes fall to pieces; books molder away and drop out of their bindings; plaster cracks; timber rots; matting is in shreds.

The sun, the steam of this vast alluvial tract, and the infinite armies of white ants, make such havoc with buildings that a house requires a complete repair every three years. Ours was in this situation about three months ago; and, if we had determined to brave the rains without any precautions, we should, in all probability, have had the roof down on our heads. Accordingly, we were forced to migrate for six weeks from our stately apartments and our flower-beds to a dungeon where we were stifled with the stench of native cookery, and deafened by the noise of native music. At last we have returned to our house. We found it all snow-white and pea-green; and we rejoice to think that we shall not again be under the necessity of quitting it till we quit it for a ship bound on a voyage to London.

We have been for some months in the middle of what the people here think a political storm. To a person accustomed to the hurricanes of English faction this sort of tempest in a horse-pond is merely ridiculous. We have put the English settlers up the country under the exclusive jurisdiction of the company's courts in civil actions in which they are concerned with natives. The English settlers are perfectly contented; but the lawyers of the Supreme Court have set up a yelp which they think terrible, and which has infinitely diverted me. They have selected me as the object of their invectives, and I am generally the theme of five or six columns of prose and verse daily. I have not patience to read a tenth part of what they put forth. The last ode in my praise which I perused began,

> Soon we hope they will recall ye,
> Tom Macaulay, Tom Macaulay.

The last prose which I read was a parallel between me and Lord Strafford.

My mornings, from five to nine, are quite my own. I still give them to ancient literature. I have read Aristophanes twice through since Christmas; and have also read Herodotus, and Thucydides, again. I got into a way last year of reading a Greek play every Sunday. I began on Sunday, the 18th of October, with the "Prome-

theus," and next Sunday I shall finish with the "Cyclops" of Euripides. Euripides has made a complete conquest of me. It has been unfortunate for him that we have so many of his pieces. It has, on the other hand, I suspect, been fortunate for Sophocles that so few of his have come down to us. Almost every play of Sophocles which is now extant was one of his masterpieces. There is hardly one of them which is not mentioned with high praise by some ancient writer. Yet one of them, the "Trachiniæ," is, to my thinking, very poor and insipid. Now, if we had nineteen plays of Sophocles, of which twelve or thirteen should be no better than the "Trachiniæ"—and if, on the other hand, only seven pieces of Euripides had come down to us, and if those seven had been the "Medea," the "Bacchæ," the "Iphigenia in Aulis," the "Orestes," the "Phœnissæ," the "Hippolytus," and the "Alcestis"—I am not sure that the relative position which the two poets now hold in our estimation would not be greatly altered.

I have not done much in Latin. I have been employed in turning over several third-rate and fourth-rate writers. After finishing Cicero, I read through the works of both the Senecas, father and son. There is a great deal in the "Controversiæ" both of curious information and of judicious criticism. As to the son, I can not bear him. His style affects me in something the same way with that of Gibbon. But Lucius Seneca's affectation is even more rank than Gibbon's. His works are made up of mottoes. There is hardly a sentence which might not be quoted; but to read him straight forward is like dining on nothing but anchovy sauce. I have read, as one does read such stuff, Valerius Maximus, Annæus Florus, Lucius Ampelius, and Aurelius Victor. I have also gone through Phædrus. I am now better employed. I am deep in the "Annals" of Tacitus, and I am at the same time reading Suetonius.

You are so rich in domestic comforts that I am inclined to envy you. I am not, however, without my share. I am as fond of my little niece as her father. I pass an hour or more every day in nursing her, and teaching her to talk. She has got as far as Ba, Pa, and Ma; which, as she is not eight months old, we consider as proofs of a

genius little inferior to that of Shakspeare or Sir Isaac Newton.

The municipal elections have put me in good spirits as to English politics. I was rather inclined to despondency.

Ever yours affectionately,

T. B. Macaulay.

[Æt. 41]

To Macvey Napier

[a defence of his diction]

Albany, London, April 18th, 1842.

My dear Napier,—

I am much obliged to you for your criticisms on my article on Frederic. My copy of the *Review* I have lent, and can not therefore refer to it. I have, however, thought over what you say, and should be disposed to admit part of it to be just. But I have several distinctions and limitations to suggest.

The charge to which I am most sensible is that of interlarding my sentences with French terms. I will not positively affirm that no such expression may have dropped from my pen, in writing hurriedly on a subject so very French. It is, however, a practice to which I am extremely averse, and into which I could fall only by inadvertence. I do not really know to what you allude; for as to words "Abbé" and "Parcaux-Cerfs," which I recollect, those surely are not open to objection. I remember that I carried my love of English in one or two places almost to the length of affectation. For example, I called the "Place des Victoires" the "Place of Victories;" and the "Fermier Général" D'Etioles a "publican." I will look over the article again, when I get it into my hands, and try to discover to what you allude.

The other charge, I confess, does not appear to me to be equally serious. I certainly should not, in regular history, use some of the phrases which you censure. But I do not consider a review of this sort as regular history, and I really think that, from the highest and most unquestionable authority, I could vindicate my practice. Take Addison, the model of pure and graceful writing. In his *Spectators* I find "wench," "baggage," "queer old put," "prig," "fearing that they should smoke the Knight."

All these expressions I met this morning, in turning over two or three of his papers at breakfast. I would no more use the word "bore" or "awkward squad" in a composition meant to be uniformly serious and earnest, than Addison would in a state paper have called Louis an "old put," or have described Shrewsbury and Argyle as "smoking" the design to bring in the Pretender. But I did not mean my article to be uniformly serious and earnest. If you judge of it as you would judge of a regular history, your censure ought to go very much deeper than it does, and to be directed against the substance as well as against the diction. The tone of many passages, nay, of whole pages, would justly be called flippant in a regular history. But I conceive that this sort of composition has its own character and its own laws. I do not claim the honour of having invented it; that praise belongs to Southey; but I may say that I have in some points improved upon his design. The manner of these little historical essays bears, I think, the same analogy to the manner of Tacitus or Gibbon which the manner of Ariosto bears to the manner of Tasso, or the manner of Shakspeare's historical plays to the manner of Sophocles. Ariosto, when he is grave and pathetic, is as grave and pathetic as Tasso; but he often takes a light, fleeting tone which suits him admirably, but which in Tasso would be quite out of place. The despair of Constance in Shakspeare is as lofty as that of Œdipus in Sophocles; but the levities of the bastard Faulconbridge would be utterly out of place in Sophocles. Yet we feel that they are not out of place in Shakspeare.

So with these historical articles. Where the subject requires it, they may rise, if the author can manage it, to the highest altitudes of Thucydides. Then, again, they may without impropriety sink to the levity and colloquial ease of Horace Walpole's Letters. This is my theory. Whether I have succeeded in the execution is quite another question. You will, however, perceive that I am in no danger of taking similar liberties in my "History." I do, indeed, greatly disapprove of those notions which some writers have of the dignity of history. For fear of alluding to the vulgar concerns of private life, they take no notice of the circumstances which deeply affect the

happiness of nations. But I never thought of denying that the language of history ought to preserve a certain dignity. I would, however, no more attempt to preserve that dignity in a paper like this on Frederic than I would exclude from such a poem as "Don Juan" slang terms, because such terms would be out of place in "Paradise Lost," or Hudibrastic rhymes, because such rhymes would be shocking in Pope's "Iliad."

As to the particular criticisms which you have made, I willingly submit my judgment to yours, though I think that I could say something on the other side. The first rule of all writing—that rule to which every other is subordinate—is that the words used by the writer shall be such as most fully and precisely convey his meaning to the great body of his readers. All considerations about the purity and dignity of style ought to bend to this consideration. To write what is not understood in its whole force for fear of using some word which was unknown to Swift or Dryden would be, I think, as absurd as to build an observatory like that at Oxford, from which it is impossible to observe, only for the purpose of exactly preserving the proportions of the Temple of the Winds at Athens. That a word which is appropriate to a particular idea, which every body, high and low, uses to express that idea, and which expresses that idea with a completeness which is not equaled by any other single word, and scarcely by any circumlocution, should be banished from writing, seems to be a mere throwing-away of power. Such a word as "talented" it is proper to avoid: first, because it is not wanted; secondly, because you never hear it from those who speak very good English. But the word "shirk" as applied to military duty is a word which every body uses; which is the word, and the only word, for the thing; which in every regiment and in every ship belonging to our country is employed ten times a day; which the Duke of Wellington, or Admiral Stopford, would use in reprimanding an officer. To interdict it, therefore, in what is meant to be familiar, and almost jocose, narrative seems to me rather rigid.

But I will not go on. I will only repeat that I am truly grateful for your advice, and that if you will, on future occasions, mark with an asterisk any words in my

proof-sheets which you think open to objection, I will try to meet your wishes, though it may sometimes be at the expense of my own.

Ever yours most truly,
T. B. Macaulay.

[Æt. 44] JOHN HENRY NEWMAN
1801–1890

To J. B. Mozley
["complicated distress"]

Littlemore: April 2, 1845.

I have just been looking at your article in the "C. R.," and it has touched me exceedingly. I knew you loved me, as I do you, but I was not prepared for what you say; and now, as is the law of such things, I know it just when I am losing it. You speak as if writing a funeral oration, and so it is. Yet sometimes I think, so it shall not be—for surely I am now more cut off from you than I can be in any other circumstances, and when the dreadful trials of the next few years are over I may have the opportunity, if we both live, of something more of intimacy with you than I can have now.

Alas! I do not forget how changeable all things are, and how difficult it is for minds to keep pace with each other which walk apart. You may fancy how all this oppresses me. All that is dear to me is being taken from me. My days are gone like a shadow, and I am withered like grass.

I say to myself, if I am under a delusion, what have I done, what grave sin have I committed, to bring such a judgment on me? O that it may be revealed to me, and the delusion broken! But I go on month after month, year after year, without change of feeling except in one direction; not floating up and down, but driving one way.

I know well, my dear James, that you do not forget to think of me at solemn times, but I really think that now the time is short. I cannot promise myself to remain as I am after Christmas, perhaps not so long, though I suppose in the event I shall linger on some little while

longer. By November I expect to have resigned my Fellowship, and perhaps may publish something.

I don't mind your telling this in confidence to anyone you please, but of course you will keep this letter safely.

What complicated distress! I suppose it will be less when the worst is over.

Ever yours most affectionately,
JOHN H. NEWMAN.

[Æt. 44]

To MRS. J. MOZLEY *

[BECOMING A ROMAN CATHOLIC]

LITTLEMORE, October 8, 1845.

My dear Jemima,—

I must tell you what will pain you greatly, but I will make it as short as you would wish me to do.

This night Father Dominic, the Passionist, sleeps here. He does not know of my intention, but I shall ask him to receive me into what I believe to be the One Fold of the Redeemer.

This will not go till all is over.

Ever yours affectionately,
JOHN H. NEWMAN.

[Æt. 77]

To DR. GREENHILL

["A STATUTE OF LIMITATION"]

January 18, 1879.

My dear Dr. Greenhill,—

You flatter me by your question;† but I think it was Keble who, when asked it in his own case, answered that poets were not bound to be critics, or to give a sense to what they had written; and though I am not, like him, a poet, at least I may plead that I am not bound to *remember* my own meaning, whatever it was, at the end of almost fifty years. Anyhow, there must be a statute of limitation for writers of verse, as it would be quite a tyranny if, in an art which is the expression, not of truth, but of imagination and sentiment, one were obliged to be ready for examination on the transient states of

* His sister.

† As to the meaning of the last two lines of "Lead, Kindly Light."

mind which came upon one when homesick or seasick, or in any other way sensitive or excited. . . .

Yours most truly,
JOHN H. NEWMAN.

[Æt. 9] RALPH WALDO EMERSON
1803–1882

TO HIS AUNT, MARY MOODY EMERSON
[A BOY'S DAY]

BOSTON, April 16, 1813.

Dear Aunt,—

I am much obliged to you for your kind letter. I mean now to give you an account of what I do commonly in one day, if that is what you meant by giving an account of one single day in my life. Friday, 9th, I choose for the day of telling what I did. In the Morning I rose, as I commonly do, about five minutes before six. I then help Wm. in making the fire, after which I set the table for Prayers. I then call mamma about quarter after six. We spell as we did before you went away. I confess I often feel an angry passion start in one corner of my heart when one of my Brothers gets above me, which I think sometimes they do by unfair means, after which we eat our breakfast; then I have from about quarter after seven till eight to play or read. I think I am rather inclined to the former. I then go to school, where I hope I can say I study more than I did a little while ago. I am in another book called Virgil, and our class are even with another which came to the Latin School one year before us. After attending this school I go to Mr. Webb's private school, where I write and cipher. I go to this place at eleven and stay till one o'clock. After this, when I come home I eat my dinner, and at two o'clock I resume my studies at the Latin School, where I do the same except in studying grammar. After I come home I do mamma her little errands if she has any; then I bring in my wood to supply the breakfast room. I then have some time to play and eat my supper. After that we say our hymns or chapters, and then take our turns in reading Rollin, as we did before you went. We retire

to bed at different times. I go at a little after eight, and retire to my private devotions, and then close my eyes in sleep, and there ends the toils of the day. . . .I have sent a letter to you in a Packet bound to Portland, which I suppose you have not received, as you made no mention of it in your letter to mamma. Give my love to Aunt Haskins and Aunt Ripley, with Robert and Charles and all my cousins, and I hope you will send me an answer to this the first opportunity, and believe me, I remain your most dutiful Nephew,

R. Waldo Emerson.

[Æt. 34]

To Carlyle

[sterling; "the french revolution" in america]

Concord, 9 February, 1838.

My dear Friend,—

It is ten days now—ten cold days—that your last letter has kept my heart warm, and I have not been able to write you before. I have just finished—Wednesday evening—a course of lectures which I ambitiously baptized "Human Culture," and read once a week to the curious in Boston. I could write nothing else the while, for weariness of the week's stated scribbling. Now I am free as a wood-bird, and can take up the pen without fretting or fear. Your letter* should, and nearly did, make me jump for joy,—fine things about our poor speech at Cambridge,—fine things from CARLYLE. Scarcely could we maintain a decorous gravity on the occasion. And then news of a friend, who is also Carlyle's friend. What has life better to offer than such tidings? You may suppose I went directly and got me Blackwood, and read the prose and the verse of John Sterling, and saw that my man had a head and a heart, and spent an hour or two very happily in spelling his biography out of his own hand;—a species of palmistry in which I have a perfect reliance. I found many incidents grave and gay and beautiful, and have determined to love him very much. In this romancing of the gentle affections we are children ever-

* For Carlyle's letter see p. 228.

more. We forget the age of life, the barriers so thin and yet so adamantean of space and circumstance; and I have had the rarest poems self-singing in my head of brave men that work and conspire in a perfect intelligence across seas and conditions—and meet at last. I heartily pray that the Sea and its vineyards may cheer with warm medicinal breath a Voyager so kind and noble.

For the *Oration,* I am so elated with your good will that I begin to fear your heart has betrayed your head this time, and so the praise is not good on Parnassus but only in friendship. I sent it diffidently (I did send it through bookselling Munroe) to you, and was not a little surprised by your generous commendations. Yet here it interested young men a good deal for an academical performance, and an edition of five hundred was disposed of in a month. A new edition is now printing, and I will send you some copies presently to give to anybody who you think will read.

I have a little budget of news myself. I hope you had my letter—sent by young Sumner—saying that we meant to print the *French Revolution* here for the Author's benefit. It was published on the 25th of December. It is published at my risk, the booksellers agreeing to let me have at cost all the copies I can get subscriptions for. All the rest they are to sell and to have twenty per cent on the retail price for their commission. The selling price of the book is $2.50; the cost of a copy, $1.26; the bookseller's commission, 50 cts.; so that T. C. only gains 74 cts. on each copy they sell. But we have two hundred subscribers, and on each copy they buy you have $1.26, except in cases where the distant residence of subscribers makes a cost of freight. You ought to have three or four quarters of a dollar more on each copy, but we put the lowest price on the book in terror of the Philistines, and to secure its accessibleness to the economical Public. We printed one thousand copies: of these, five hundred are already sold, in six weeks; and Brown the bookseller talks, as I think, much too modestly, of getting rid of the whole edition in one year. I say six months. The printing, &c., is to be paid and a settlement made in six months from the day of publication; and I hope that the settlement will be the final one. And I confide in send-

ing you seven hundred dollars at least, as a certificate that you have so many readers in the West. Yet, I own, I shake a little at the thought of the bookseller's account. Whenever I have seen that species of document, it was strange how the hopefulest ideal dwindled away to a dwarfish actual. But you may be assured I shall on this occasion summon to the bargain all the Yankee in my constitution, and multiply and divide like a lion.

The book has the best success with the best. Young men say it is the only history they have ever read. The middle-aged and the old shake their heads, and cannot make anything of it. In short, it has the success of a book which, as people have not fashioned, has to fashion the people. It will take some time to win all, but it wins and will win. I sent a notice of it to the *Christian Examiner,* but the editor sent it all back to me except the first and last paragraphs; those he printed. And the editor of the *North American* declined giving a place to a paper from another friend of yours. But we shall see. I am glad you are to print your *Miscellanies;* but — forgive our Transatlantic effrontery—we are beforehand of you, and we are already selecting a couple of volumes from the same, and shall print them on the same plan as the *History,* and hope so to turn a penny for our friend again. I surely should not do this thing without consulting you as to the selection but that I had no choice. If I waited, the bookseller would have done it himself, and carried off the profit. I sent you (to Kennet) a copy of the *French Revolution.* I regret exceedingly the printer's blunder about the numbering the Books in the volumes, but he had warranted me in a literal, punctual reprint of the copy without its leaving his office, and I trusted him. I am told there are many errors. I am going to see for myself. I have filled my paper, and not yet said a word of how many things. You tell me how ill was Mrs. C., and you do not tell me that she is well again. But I see plainly that I must take speedily another sheet. I love you always.

R. W. Emerson.

[Æt. 44]

To His Wife

[STAYING WITH THE CARLYLES]

CHELSEA, LONDON, October 27, 1847.

Dear Lidian:

. . . I found at Liverpool after a couple of days a letter which had been once there seeking me (and once returned to Manchester before it reached my hands) from Carlyle, addressed to "R. W. E., on the instant he lands in England," conveying so hearty a welcome and so urgent an invitation to house and hearth that I could no more resist than I could gravitation; and finding that I should not be wanted for a week in the lecture-rooms, I came hither on Monday, and, at ten at night, the door was opened to me by Jane Carlyle, and the man himself was behind her with a lamp in the entry. They were very little changed from their old selves of fourteen years ago (in August), when I left them at Craigenputtock.

"Well," said Carlyle, "here we are, shovelled together again." The floodgates of his talk are quickly opened, and the river is a great and constant stream. We had large communication that night until nearly one o'clock, and at breakfast next morning it began again. At noon or later we went together, Carlyle and I, to Hyde Park and the palaces (about two miles from here), to the National Gallery, and to the Strand,—Carlyle melting all Westminster and London down into his talk and laughter as he walked. We came back to dinner at five or later; then Dr. Carlyle came in and spent the evening, which again was long by the clock, but had no other measures. Here in this house we breakfast about nine; Carlyle is very apt, his wife says, to sleep till ten or eleven, if he has no company. An immense talker he is, and altogether as extraordinary in his conversation as in his writing,—I think even more so. You will never discover his real vigor and range, or how much more he might do than he has ever done, without seeing him. I find my few hours' discourse with him in Scotland, long since, gave me not enough knowledge of him, and I have now at last been taken by surprise. . . . Carlyle and his wife live on beautiful terms. Nothing can be more

engaging than their ways, and in her bookcase all his books are inscribed to her, as they came, from year to year, each with some significant lines.

But you will wish to hear more of my adventures, which I must hasten to record. On Wednesday, at the National Gallery, Mrs. Bancroft greeted me with the greatest kindness, and insisted on presenting me to Mr. Rogers, who chanced to come into the gallery with ladies. Mr. Rogers invited me to breakfast, with Mrs. B., at his house on Friday. . . . The smoke of London, through which the sun rarely penetrates, gives a dusky magnificence to these immense piles of building in the west part of the city, which makes my walking rather dream-like. Martin's pictures of Babylon, etc., are faithful copies of the west part of London; light, darkness, architecture, and all. Friday morning at half past nine I presented myself at Mr. Bancroft's door, 90 Eaton Square, which was opened by Mr. Bancroft himself! in the midst of servants whom that man of eager manners thrust aside, saying he would open his own door for me. He was full of goodness and of talk. . . . Mrs. Bancroft appeared, and we rode in her carriage to Mr. Rogers' house. . . . Mr. Rogers received us with cold, quiet, indiscriminate politeness, and entertained us with abundance of anecdote, which Mrs. Bancroft very skilfully drew out of him, about people more or less interesting to me. Scott, Wordsworth, Byron, Wellington, Talleyrand, Mme. de Staël, Lafayette, Fox, Burke, and crowds of high men and women had talked and feasted in these rooms in which we sat, and which are decorated with every precious work. . . . I think it must be the chief private show of London, this man's collection. But I will not bore you with any more particulars. From this house Mrs. Bancroft carried me to the cloister of Westminster Abbey and to the Abbey itself, and then insisted on completing her bounties by carrying me in her coach to Carlyle's door at Chelsea, a very long way. . . . At five P.M. yesterday, after spending four complete days with my friends, I took the fast train for Liverpool, and came hither, 212 miles, in six hours; which is nearly twice our railway speed. In Liverpool I drank tea last Saturday night with James Martineau, and heard him preach on Sunday night last. He is a sincere, sensi-

ble, good man, and though greatly valued as a preacher, yet I thought him superior to his books and his preaching. I have seen Mr. Ireland, also, at Manchester on my way to London, and his friends. It seems I am to read six lectures in this town in three weeks, and at the same time three lectures in each week in Manchester, on other evenings. When this service is ended I may have as many new engagements as I like, they tell me. I am to begin at Manchester next Tuesday evening.

November 1, Tuesday evening. I am heartily tired of Liverpool. I am oppressed by the seeing of such multitudes: there is a fierce strength here in all the streets; the men are bigger and solider far than our people, more stocky, both men and women, and with a certain fixedness and determination in each person's air, that discriminates them from the sauntering gait and roving eyes of Americans. In America you catch the eye of every one you meet; here you catch no eye, almost. The axes of an Englishman's eyes are united to his backbone. . . . Yesterday morning I got your welcome letter (by Mr. Ireland). I am greatly contented to know that all is so well with you. . . .

Ever affectionately yours,
WALDO E.

[Æt. 36] NATHANIEL HAWTHORNE
1804–1864

TO HIS SISTER

[BROOK FARM NEWS]

BROOK FARM, WEST ROXBURY, May 3, 1841.

As the weather precludes all possibility of ploughing, hoeing, sowing, and other such operations, I bethink me that you may have no objections to hear something of my whereabout and whatabout. You are to know, then, that I took up my abode here on the 12th ultimo, in the midst of a snow-storm, which kept us all idle for a day or two. At the first glimpse of fair weather, Mr. Ripley summoned us into the cow-yard, and introduced me to an instrument with four prongs, commonly entitled a dung-fork. With this tool I have already assisted to load twenty or thirty carts of manure, and shall take

part in loading nearly three hundred more. Besides, I have planted potatoes and pease, cut straw and hay for the cattle, and done various other mighty works. This very morning I milked three cows, and I milk two or three every night and morning. The weather has been so unfavorable that we have worked comparatively little in the fields; but, nevertheless, I have gained strength wonderfully,—grown quite a giant, in fact,—and can do a day's work without the slightest inconvenience. In short, I am transformed into a complete farmer.

This is one of the most beautiful places I ever saw in my life, and as secluded as if it were a hundred miles from any city or village. There are woods, in which we can ramble all day without meeting anybody or scarcely seeing a house. Our house stands apart from the main road, so that we are not troubled even with passengers looking at us. Once in a while we have a transcendental visitor, such as Mr. Alcott; but generally we pass whole days without seeing a single face, save those of the brethren. The whole fraternity eat together; and such a delectable way of life has never been seen on earth since the days of the early Christians. We get up at half-past four, breakfast at half-past six, dine at half-past twelve, and go to bed at nine.

The thin frock which you made for me is considered a most splendid article, and I should not wonder if it were to become the summer uniform of the Community. I have a thick frock, likewise; but it is rather deficient in grace, though extremely warm and comfortable. I wear a tremendous pair of cowhide boots, with soles two inches thick,—of course, when I come to see you I shall wear my farmer's dress.

We shall be very much occupied during most of this month, ploughing and planting; so that I doubt whether you will see me for two or three weeks. You have the portrait by this time, I suppose; so you can very well dispense with the original. When you write to me (which I beg you will do soon), direct your letter to West Roxbury, as there are two post-offices in the town. I would write more, but William Allen is going to the village, and must have this letter. So good-by.

NATH. HAWTHORNE, *Ploughman.*

[Æt. 49]

To G. S. Hillard

["THE MISERABLE PINCH IS OVER"]

Liverpool, Dec. 9, 1853.

Dear Hillard,—

I herewith send you a draft on Ticknor for the sum (with interest included) which was so kindly given me by unknown friends, through you, about four years ago.

I have always hoped and intended to do this, from the first moment when I made up my mind to accept the money. It would not have been right to speak of this purpose before it was in my power to accomplish it; but it has never been out of my mind for a single day, nor hardly, I think, for a single working hour. I am most happy that this loan (as I may fairly call it, at this moment) can now be repaid without the risk on my part of leaving my wife and children utterly destitute. I should have done it sooner; but I felt that it would be selfish to purchase the great satisfaction for myself, at any fresh risk to them. We are not rich, nor are we ever likely to be; but the miserable pinch is over.

The friends who were so generous to me must not suppose that I have not felt deeply grateful, nor that my delight at relieving myself from this pecuniary obligation is of any ungracious kind. I have been grateful all along, and am more so now than ever. This act of kindness did me an unspeakable amount of good; for it came when I most needed to be assured that anybody thought it worth while to keep me from sinking. And it did me even greater good than this, in making me sensible of the need of sterner efforts than my former ones, in order to establish a right for myself to live and be comfortable. For it is my creed (and was so even at that wretched time) that a man has no claim upon his fellow-creatures, beyond bread and water, and a grave, unless he can win it by his own strength or skill. But so much the kinder were those unknown friends whom I thank again with all my heart.

1806–1867

To Miss Mitford

["STEEPED TO THE LIPS IN LONDON SOCIETY"]

Athenæum, London, April 22, 1835.

My dear Miss Mitford,—

I am anxious to see your play and your next book, and I quite agree with you that the drama is your *pied,* though I think laurels, and spreading ones, are sown for you in every department of writing. Nobody ever wrote better prose, and what could not the author of "Rienzi" do in verse? I should like to talk over this with you.

For myself I am far from considering myself regularly embarked in literature, and if I can live without it, or ply any other vocation, shall vote it a thankless trade, and save my "entusymussy"* for my wife and children—when I get them. I am at present steeped to the lips in London society, going to everything, from Devonshire House to a publisher's dinner in Paternoster Row, and it is not a bad *olla podrida* of life and manners. I dote on "England and true English," and was never so happy or so at a loss to find a minute for care or forethought.

I really have ten thousand things I wish to write about or talk about to you; but a letter is a needle's point to dance upon, and I must keep all my flourishes till I see you. No letter is so small, however, that I cannot express in it my happiness and pride in your friendship, and I beg you to believe, dear Miss Mitford, that your kindness is appreciated and your regard sought by no one more sensitively than,

Faithfully and always yours,

N. P. Willis.

* Enthusiasm.

1806–1844

To his Mother

[A hurricane in the West Indies]

Brighton, St. Vincent,
28th August, 1831.

My dear Mother,—

The packet came in yesterday; bringing me some Newspapers, a Letter from my Father, and one from Anthony, with a few lines from you. I wrote, some days ago, a hasty Note to my Father, on the chance of its reaching you through Grenada sooner than any communication by the packet; and in it I spoke of the great misfortune which had befallen this Island and Barbadoes, but from which all those you take an interest in have happily escaped unhurt.

From the day of our arrival in the West Indies until Thursday the 11th instant, which will long be a memorable day with us, I had been doing my best to get ourselves established comfortably; and I had at last bought the materials for making some additions to the house. But on the morning I have mentioned, all that I had exerted myself to do, nearly all the property both of Susan and myself, and the very house we lived in, were suddenly destroyed by a visitation of Providence far more terrible than any I have ever witnessed.

When Susan came from her room, to breakfast, at eight o'clock, I pointed out to her the extraordinary height and violence of the surf, and the singular appearance of the clouds of heavy rain sweeping down the valleys before us. At this time I had so little apprehension of what was coming, that I talked of riding down to the shore when the storm should abate, as I had never seen so fierce a sea. In about a quarter of an hour the House-Negroes came in, to close the outside shutters of the windows. They knew that the plantain-trees about the Negro houses had been blown down in the night; and had told the maid-servant Tyrrell, but I had heard nothing of it. A very few minutes after the closing of the windows, I found that the shutters of Tyrrell's room, at the south and commonly the most sheltered end of

the House, were giving way. I tried to tie them; but the silk handkerchief which I used soon gave way; and as I had neither hammer, boards, nor nails in the house, I could do nothing more to keep out the tempest. I found, in pushing at the leaf of the shutter, that the wind resisted, more as if it had been a stone wall or a mass of iron, than a mere current of air. There were one or two people outside trying to fasten the windows, and I went out to help; but we had no tools at hand: one man was blown down the hill in front of the house, before my face; and the other and myself had great difficulty in getting back again inside the door. The rain on my face and hands felt like so much small shot from a gun. There was great exertion necessary to shut the door of the house.

The windows at the end of the large room were now giving way; and I suppose it was about nine o'clock, when the hurricane burst them in, as if it had been a discharge from a battery of heavy cannon. The shutters were forced open, and the wind fastened them back to the wall; and then the panes of glass were smashed by the mere force of the gale, without anything having touched them. Even now I was not at all sure the house would go. My books, I saw, were lost; for the rain poured past the book-cases, as if it had been the Colonarie River. But we carried a good deal of furniture into the passage at the entrance; we sat Susan there on a sofa, and the Black Housekeeper was even attempting to get her some breakfast. The house, however, began to shake so violently, and the rain was so searching, that she could not stay there long. She went into her own room; and I stayed to see what could be done.

Under the fore part of the house, there are cellars built of stone, but not arched. To these, however, there was no access except on the outside; and I knew from my own experience that Susan could not have gone a step beyond the door, without being carried away by the storm, and probably killed on the spot. The only chance seemed to be that of breaking through the floor. But when the old Cook and myself resolved on this, we found that we had no instrument with which it would be pos-

sible to do it. It was now clear that we had only God to trust in. The front windows were giving way with successive crashes, and the floor shook as you may have seen a carpet on a gusty day in London. I went into our bed-room; where I found Susan, Tyrrell, and a little Coloured girl of seven or eight years old; and told them that we should probably not be alive in half an hour. I could have escaped, if I had chosen to go alone, by crawling on the ground either into the kitchen, a separate stone building at no great distance, or into the open fields away from trees or houses; but Susan could not have gone a yard. She became quite calm when she knew the worst; and she sat on my knee in what seemed the safest corner of the room, while every blast was bringing nearer and nearer the moment of our seemingly certain destruction.

The house was under two parallel roofs; and the one next the sea, which sheltered the other, and us who were under the other, went off, I suppose about ten o'clock. . . . I was sitting in an arm-chair, holding my Wife; and Tyrrell and the little Black child were close to us. We had given up all notion of surviving; and only waited for the fall of the roof to perish together.

Before long the roof went. Most of the materials, however, were carried clear away: one of the large couples was caught on the bed-post, . . . and held fast by the iron spike; while the end of it hung over our heads: had the beam fallen an inch on either side of the bed-post, it must necessarily have crushed us. The walls did not go with the roof; and we remained for half an hour, alternately praying to God, and watching them as they bent, creaked, and shivered before the storm.

Tyrrell and the child, when the roof was off, made their way through the remains of the partition, to the outer door; and with the help of the people who were looking for us, got into the kitchen. A good while after they were gone, and before we knew anything of their fate, a Negro came suddenly upon us, and the sight of him gave us a hope of safety. When the people learned that we were in danger, and while their own huts were flying about their ears, they crowded to help us; and the old Cook urged them on to our rescue. He made

five attempts, after saving Tyrrell, to get to us; and four times he was blown down. The fifth time he, and the Negro we first saw, reached the house. The space they had to traverse was not above twenty yards of level ground, if so much. In another minute or two, the Overseers and a crowd of Negroes, most of whom had come on their hands and knees, were surrounding us; and with their help, Susan was carried round to the end of the house; where they broke-open the cellar window, and placed her in comparative safety. The force of the hurricane was, by this time, a good deal diminished, or it would have been impossible to stand before it.

But the wind was still terrific; and the rain poured into the cellars through the floor above. Susan, Tyrrell, and a crowd of Negroes remained under it, for more than two hours: and I was long afraid that the wet and cold would kill her, if she did not perish more violently. Happily we had wine and spirits at hand, and she was much nerved by a tumbler of claret. As soon as I saw her in comparative security, I went off with one of the Overseers down to the Works, where the greater number of the Negroes were collected, that we might see what could be done for them. They were wretched enough, but no one was hurt; and I ordered them a dram apiece, which seemed to give them a good deal of consolation. . . . I am ever, dearest Mother,

Your grateful and affectionate,

JOHN STERLING.

[Æt. 32]

HENRY WADSWORTH LONGFELLOW

1807–1882

To GEORGE W. GREEN

["HYPERION"; DOINGS OF AUTHORS]

July 23, 1839.

Three pages of fault-finding you call a letter. I don't. Find fault to your heart's content; but be more concentrated. There you are in Rome, with all the world marching and countermarching before you, and you have

no more to say than if you were in East Greenwich. And when I want particulars about yourself, you laugh in my face, and then fill a whole page with broken columns, moonlight, and the Coliseum; as if I were a female cousin, and kept an album. This is not fair; I am regularly savage about it. Now having disgorged this crude mass, let us pass to more important matters. Is not Sumner a glorious youth?—with a halo round his head, as it were. His presence is beneficent, and we shall all await his return with fluttering impatience. A warm-hearted, manly fellow, and an ardent friend. I know you must have enjoyed his society.

I have written a Romance during this past year. The *feelings* of the book are true; the *events* of the story mostly fictitious. The heroine, of course, bears a resemblance to the lady, without being an exact portrait. There is no betrayal of confidence, *no real scene* described. *Hyperion* is the name of the book, not of the hero. It merely indicates that here is the life of one who in his feelings and purposes is a "son of Heaven and Earth," and who though obscured by clouds yet "moves on high." Further than this the name has nothing to do with the book, and in fact is mentioned only once in the course of it. I expect to be mightily abused. People will say that I am the hero of my own romance, and compare myself to the sun, to Hyperion Apollo. This is not so. I wish only to embody certain feelings which are mine, not to magnify myself. I do not care for abuse, if it is real, manly, hearty abuse. All that I fear is the *laudatur et alget*, the damnation of faint praise; *that* I hope to avoid, this time.

. . . And now for American literature. Hillhouse is publishing a new edition of his poems. Prescott is writing a History of the Conquest of Mexico. —— has published a poem (?)—most rabid trash, trash with a tin pail tied to its tail. Yet Willis says, "If God ever made a poet, it is ——." Willis's *A l'Abri* is a collection of letters written from his country-seat on the Susquehanna, and published in the Mirror as "Letters from under a Bridge;" very racy and beautiful. Hillard has in the press a new and beautiful edition of Spenser, with preface and notes by himself. Felton is busily at

work upon a translation of Menzel's German Literature. He is doing it finely. New York is becoming more and more literary. It is also becoming a little less bigoted; Mr. Brooks, *ci-devant* Unitarian clergyman in Hingham, has been elected Professor of Botany in the New York University. Cooper, the novelist, is up to his arm-pits in law-suits,—libel cases against the editors of newspapers for abusing him. Decidedly a disagreeable individual! Bulwerism is dying out; Marryatism, ditto. Dickens reigns supreme as the popular writer. Bancroft has written a violent article against Goethe in the Christian Examiner. Washington Irving is writing away in the Knickerbocker,—old remnants, odds and ends about Sleepy Hollow and Granada. What a pity! A Miss Fuller has published a translation of "flunky" Eckermann's Conversations with Goethe. Dr. Bird, a new novel.

[Æt. 33

To his Father

[the brook farm experiment]

October 18, 1840.

Since I last wrote you, sundry novelties have appeared in this quarter of the world, which you may see hinted at in the papers. They are among the moral reforms of the day; and have at once something serious and something comic about them. You probably have heard of the Non-Resistance Society in Boston, who wish to follow out literally the injunctions "If a man strike you on one cheek," and "If a man take away your cloak," etc. One of the chief men of this society is Mr. Edmund Quincy, second son of our President. They have now called a convention, inviting people of all creeds and denominations to attend, and discuss the great questions, "What is the Church, the Sabbath, Religion?" Not long ago there was a similar convention held in Groton. The first resolution was, "Voted, that we are not sectarian;" whereupon discussion arose as to what constituted a sect; which discussion lasted for three days, when the convention adjourned. Not long after, came

up from Cape Cod a new sect called the "Come-outers," who formed a holy alliance with the Transcendentalists.

Out of this fermentation of mind has sprung up a new plan; namely, to form a community to be called "The Practical Christians." Each individual is to subscribe two hundred dollars, and each family one thousand; a farm is to be bought near Boston, cottages to be built, and then the community goes to work. Every member is to labor three hours a day; the remainder of the time is to be at his own disposal. There is no further community of goods than this. The three hours' labor it is thought will feed, clothe, and lodge them all; and the rest of the time is to be devoted to the fine arts, music, literature, etc., etc. I hear that the Rev. George Ripley, Mr. Emerson, Miss Fuller, and other prominent Transcendentalists are going to this Land of Promise. Likewise Mr. Alcott, the author of "Orphic Sayings" in the Dial; though I fear he will be an unprofitable farmer, for, being a great Grahamite, he refuses to put manure on the land he now cultivates in Concord, thinking it too stimulating! What will be the final result of all these movements it is impossible to foresee; some good end, I trust, for they are sincere men, and have a good intent.

[Æt. 42]

To Charles Eliot Norton

[NEWS FOR INDIA FROM NEW ENGLAND]

February 5, 1850.

I have been thinking how very odd and outlandish anything written on the banks of Charles River must sound when read on the banks of the Ganges; and how small we must all appear to you who are personally acquainted with "the Boundless Krishna, the Valiant," and with the "Moonshees" who write his poems for him! A magnificent Oriental idea is that,—feebly put in practice in England by Day and Martin, and in New England by Simmons of Oak Hall. Yesterday afternoon I was at Shady Hill. Your father was below stairs in his study, a little pale from his late illness; and the whole

scene wore its usual sunny, genial, happy aspect,—your portrait looking pensively from the wall toward the fire, as if "musing while it burned." Mr. Sparks was there; and we all talked of you and Ritchie, and walked awhile beside your palanquins. In the Craigie House is nothing new. Tom. Appleton is in England. [In Boston] Mrs. Fanny Kemble is reading Shakespeare. Charles Perkins gives *matinées musicales* at No. 1 Tremont Court, which are very pleasant. Mr. Ticknor's book [History of Spanish Literature] is a great success. Bowen is in very hot water for abusing the Magyars, in the North American,—and rather likes it. Politics are raging furiously,—the hot Southrons blustering as usual, but I trust to no effect. There is no danger of a dissolution of the Union. Therefore be not alarmed by what you read in the newspapers.

And now, dear C., *Namaraskam! Sashtangam!* and whatever may be the Hindoo for "I love you." Salute for me the Sacred River, that "flows from the sweat of Siva's wife,"—rather an uncomfortable companion, one would think, in a warm climate. Bring home the two great epics,—the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata*. You will regret it if you do not. Also, from Persia, Zoroaster's *Zend Avesta*.

[Æt. 52]

To Emily A——
[his children]

Nahant, August 18, 1859.

Your letter followed me down here by the seaside, where I am passing the summer with my three little girls. The oldest is about your age; but as little girls' ages keep changing every year, I can never remember exactly how old she is, and have to ask her mamma, who has a better memory than I have. Her name is Alice; I never forget that. She is a nice girl, and loves poetry almost as much as you do.

The second is Edith, with blue eyes and beautiful golden locks which I sometimes call her "nankeen hair," to make her laugh. She is a very busy little woman, and wears gray boots.

The youngest is Allegra; which, you know, means merry; and she is the merriest little thing you ever saw, —always singing and laughing all over the house.

These are my three little girls, and Mr. Read has painted them all in one picture, which I hope you will see some day. They bathe in the sea, and dig in the sand, and patter about the piazza all day long, and sometimes go to see the Indians encamped on the shore, and buy baskets and bows and arrows.

I do not say anything about the two boys. They are such noisy fellows it is of no use to talk about them.

And now, dear Miss Emily, give my love to your papa, and good-night, with a kiss, from his friend and yours.

[Æt. 53]

To James T. Fields

[A folio from a lady]

Cambridge, September 20, 1860.

I have no end of poems sent me for "candid judgment" and opinion. Four are on hand at this moment. A large folio came last night from a lady. It has been chasing me round the country; has been in East Cambridge and in West Cambridge; and finally came by the hands of policeman Sanderson to my house. I wish he had "waived examination and committed it"—to memory. What shall I do? These poems weaken me very much. It is like so much water added to the spirit of poetry.

[Æt. 53]

To James T. Fields

[An umbrella for lending]

March 3, 1863.

I was ashamed this morning to send the expressman to your door in quest of an old umbrella, not unlike that which accompanied and consoled the exiled king of France in his flight to England. Nevertheless, I did send; for it is a lineal descendant of King Cotton, and is of that

particularly audacious kind that never says "Lost." In the hands of a modern "sensuous" poet the handle would become pearl (daughter, not mother of) and the rest would be of a "tissue from the looms of Samarcand." Finally, it is the one I keep to lend to lecturers at the Lowell Institute, and the like; and, though very dissipated, is worth reclaiming.

Accept my apology and believe me, or not,

Yours truly.

[Æt. 57]

To George W. Greene

[Dante's "Inferno"]

March 25, 1864.

This is a lovely day, as you are well aware. Moreover, it is Good Friday, as you are equally well aware; and leaving aside the deeper meaning of the day, I will tell you something of which I suspect you are not aware. Have you remembered, or noticed, that the days and dates of 1864 correspond with those of the Dantesque 1300?—so that in both years Good Friday falls on the 25th of March. Five hundred and sixty-four years ago to-day, Dante descended to the *città dolente;* and to-day, with the first two cantos of the *Inferno* in my hand, I descended among the printers' devils,—the *malebolge* of the University Press. Is it a good omen? I know not. But something urges me on and on and on with this work, and will not let me rest; though I often hear the warning voice from within,—

Me degno a ciò nè io nè altri crede.

Did you ever notice the beautiful and endless aspiration so artistically and silently suggested by Dante in closing each part of his poem with the word *stelle?* Did any Italian commentator ever find it out? Among English translators, I believe Cayley was the first to remark it.

To Lucy Larcom

[DECLINING AN INVITATION]

25th 3d mo., 1866.

Believe me, Lucy Larcom, it gives me real sorrow
That I cannot take my carpet-bag and go to town to-morrow;
But I'm "snow-bound," and cold on cold like layers of an onion
Have piled my back and weighed me down as with the pack of Bunyan.
The northeast wind is damper and the northwest wind is colder,
Or else the matter simply is that I am growing older.
And then I dare not trust a moon seen over one's left shoulder,
As I saw this with slender horns caught in a west hill pine,
As on a Stamboul minaret curves the arch-impostor's sign,—
So I must stay in Amesbury, and let you go your way,
And guess what colors greet your eyes, what shapes your steps delay;
What pictured forms of heathen lore, of god and goddess please you,
What idol graven images you bend your wicked knees to.
But why should I of evil dream, well knowing at your head goes,
That flower of Christian womanhood, our dear good Anna Meadows.
She'll be discreet, I'm sure, although once in a freak romantic
She flung the Doge's bridal ring and married "The Atlantic."
And, spite of all appearances, like the woman in a shoe
She's got so many "Young Folks" now, she don't know what to do.
But I must say I think it strange that thee and Mrs. Spaulding,
Whose lives with Calvin's five-railed creed have been so tightly walled in,

Should quit your Puritan homes, and take the pains to go
So far, with malice aforethought, to "walk in a vain show!"
Did Emmons hunt for pictures? Was Jonathan Edwards peeping
Into the chambers of imagery with maids for Thormuz weeping?
Ah well! the times are sadly changed, and I myself am feeling
The wicked world my Quaker coat from off my shoulders peeling.
God grant that in the strange new sea of change wherein we swim,
We still may keep the good old plank, of simple faith in Him!

[Æt. 59] To James T. Fields
["snow-bound"]

[1866?]

I thank thee for looking over my poem. I have acted as well as I could on thy hints, but I have left one "bad rhyme," *heard* and *word,* to preserve my well-known character in that respect. I don't know about the portrait. At first thought, it strikes me that it would be rather out of place at the head of a new venture in rhyme. I don't want to run the risk of being laughed at. However, do as thee likes about it. Put thyself in the place of Mrs. Grundy, and see if it will be safe for any "counterfeit presentment" to brave the old lady's criticism. I think I have not injured the piece by my alterations,—that on the second page of the proof is rather improved than otherwise; and I have added two lines to my slightly *lackadaisical* reference to the boys and girls, in road-breaking. Don't send the poem to me again. I shall tear it all to pieces with alterations, if thee do. In the picture of the old home, the rim of hemlocks, etc., at the foot of the high hill which rises abruptly to the left, is not seen. They would make a far better snow picture than the oaks which are in the view. Don't put the poem on tinted or fancy paper. Let it be white as the snow it tells of.

[Æt. 77]

To Annie Fields

["the survivors of a lost crew"]

10th mo., 2, 1885.

I have been thinking of thy gracious and generous proposal of hospitality. It has made me very happy, though I have not been able to see how I can avail myself of it. I find that I am unable to bear the excitement of city life for any length of time, however carefully I may be shielded by my friends. I am unhappily notorious, and cannot hide myself. My deafness makes me confused and uncomfortable when strangers are present. The great and really painful effort I am compelled to make when in company, to listen and try to understand, and make fitting replies, and the uncertainty I feel, when I venture to speak, whether I have heard aright—all this affects my nerves, and costs me nights of sleeplessness and days of weariness. In fact I am what the Turks call "a cut-off one," so far as society is concerned. . . . As soon as it is known that I am in your premises a steady stream of interviewers, autograph-hunters, and people with missions will flow in upon you. It would be like having a waif from Barnum's Museum shut up in your library, and people coming in to see what it looks like. It would make your life miserable. Sarah's dog could not keep them off. You would have to get out a writ of ejectment and set me and my carpet-bag into the street—and yet how I wish I could say "yes"! I thank the good Providence that has given me such a friend, dear as Vittoria Colonna to Michael Angelo. I wish I could look forward to the enjoyment of such friendship for many years in this life, but when one is approaching fourscore that is not to be expected. Though for that matter, I see that Senator Hoar, in his great speech of day before yesterday at Springfield, took occasion to deny the self-evident fact that I am an old man! . . . I had a rare good visit from Dr. Holmes and his wife the other day. We two old boys wandered about in the woods, talking of many things—half merry, half sad. We were stranded mariners, the survivors of a lost crew, warming ourselves at a fire kindled from the

wreck of our vessel. . . . The woods here are blazing with color, but I fail to see the red against the green. Both look the same. But the walnuts and maples are glorious, making sunshine when there is none in the heavens.

[Æt. 34] EDGAR ALLAN POE

1809–1849

To F. W. Thomas and J. E. Dow

["spreeing upon an extensive scale"]

Philadelphia, March 16, 1843.

My dear Thomas and Dow,—

I arrived here in perfect safety, and *sober,* about half-past four last evening—nothing occurring on the road of any consequence. I shaved and breakfasted in Baltimore, and lunched on the Susquehanna, and by the time I got to Philadelphia felt quite decent. Mrs. Clemm* was expecting me at the car-office. I went immediately home, took a warm bath and supper, and then went to Clarke's. I never saw a man in my life more surprised to see another. He thought by Dow's epistle that I must not only be dead but buried, and would as soon have thought of seeing his great-great-great-grandmother. He received me, therefore, very cordially, and made light of the matter. I told him what had been agreed upon—that I was a little sick, and that Dow, knowing I had been, in times past, given to spreeing upon an extensive scale, had become unduly alarmed, &c., &c.—that when I found he had written, I thought it best to come home. He said my trip had improved me, and that he had never *seen me looking so well!*—and I don't believe I ever did. This morning I took medicine, and, as it is a snowy day will avail myself of the excuse to stay at home—so that by to-morrow I shall be *really* as well as ever. Virginia's† health is about the same; but her distress of mind had been even more than I had anticipated. She desires her *kindest* remembrances to both of you—as also does Mrs. C.

Clarke, it appears, wrote to Dow, who must have re-

* Mrs. Poe's mother. † Poe's wife.

ceived the letter this morning. Please reënclose the letter to me, here, so that I may know how to guide myself. And, Thomas, do write immediately as proposed. If *possible,* enclose a line from Rob Tyler—but I fear under the circumstances, it is not so. I blame no one but myself.

The letter which I looked for, and which I wished returned, is not on its way—reason, no money forthcoming—Lowell had not yet sent it. He is ill in New York, of ophthalmia. Immediately upon receipt of it, or before, I will forward the money you were both so kind as to lend, which is eight to Dow, and three and a half to Thomas. What a confounded business I have got myself into, attempting to write a letter to two people at once!

However, this is for Dow. My dear fellow, thank you a thousand times for your kindness and great forbearance, and don't say a word about the cloak turned inside out, or other peccadilloes of that nature. Also, express to your wife my deep regret for the vexation I must have occasioned her. Send me, also, if you can, the letter to Blythe. Call, also, at the barber's shop just above Fuller's and pay for me a levy which I believe I owe. And now, God bless you, for a nobler fellow never lived.

And this is for Thomas. My dear friend, forgive me my petulance and don't believe I think all I said. Believe me, I am very grateful to you for your many attentions and forbearances, and the time will never come when I shall forget either them or you. Remember me most kindly to Dr. Lacey—also to the Don, whose mustachios I do admire after all, and who has about the finest figure I ever beheld—also to Dr. Frailey. Please express my regret to Mr. Fuller for making such a fool of myself in his house, and say to him (if you think it necessary) that I should not have got half so drunk on his excellent port wine but for the rummy coffee with which I was forced to wash it down. I would be glad, too, if you would take an opportunity of saying to Mr. Rob Tyler that if he *can* look over matters and get me the inspectorship, I will join the Washingtonians forthwith. I am as serious as a judge—and much [more] so

than many. I think it would be a feather in Mr. Tyler's cap to save from the perils of mint julep—and "Port wines"—a young man of whom all the world thinks so well and who thinks so remarkably well of himself.

And now, my dear friends, good-by, and believe me most truly yours,

EDGAR A. POE.

[Æt. 34]

TO JAMES RUSSELL LOWELL

[LONG POEMS PROSAIC]

PHILADELPHIA, October 19, 1843.

My dear Friend,—

I was upon the point of fulfilling a long neglected duty and replying to Mr. Carter's letter, enclosing $5, when I received yours of the 13th, remitting $5 more. Believe me I am sincerely grateful to you both for your uniform kindness and consideration.

You say nothing of your health—but Mr. C. speaks of its perfect restoration, and I see, by your very MS., that you are well again, body and mind. I need not say that I am rejoiced at this—for you must know and feel that I am. When I thought of the possible loss of your eyesight, I grieved as if some dreadful misfortune were about happening to myself.

I shall look with much anxiety for your promised volume. Will it include your "Year's Life," and other poems already published? I hope that it may; for these have not yet been fairly placed before the eye of the world. I am seeking an opportunity to do you justice in a review, and may find it in "Graham," when your book appears. No poet in America has done so much. I have maintained this upon all occasions. Mr. Longfellow has genius, but by no means equals you in the true spirit. He is moreover so prone to imitation that I know not how to understand him at times. I am in doubt whether he should not be termed an arrant plagiarist. You have read his "Spanish Student?" I have written quite a long notice of it for Graham's December number. The play is a poor composition, with some fine poetical passages. His "Hymn to the Night," with some strange blemishes, is glorious.—How much I should like

to interchange opinions with you upon poems and poets in general! I fancy that we should agree, usually, in results, while differing, frequently, about principles. The day may come when we can discuss everything at leisure, in person.

You say that your long poem has taught you a useful lesson,—"that you are unfit to write narrative—unless in a dramatic form." It is not you that are unfit for the task—but the task for you—for any poet. Poetry must eschew narrative—except, as you say, dramatically. I mean to say that the *true* poetry—the highest poetry—must eschew it. The Iliad is *not* the highest. The connecting links of a narrative—the frequent passages which have to serve the purpose of binding together the parts of the story, are necessarily prose, from their very explanatory nature. To color them—to gloss over their prosaic nature—(for this is the most which can be done) requires great skill. Thus Byron, who was no artist, is always driven, in his narrative, to fragmentary passages, eked out with asterisks. Moore succeeds better than any one. His "Alciphron" is wonderful in the force, grace, and nature of its purely narrative passages:—but pardon me for prosing.

I send you the paper with my life and portrait. The former is true in general—the latter particularly false. It does not convey the faintest idea of my person. No one of my family recognized it. But this is a point of little importance. You will see, upon the back of the biography, an announcement that I was to assume the editorship of the "Museum." This was unauthorized. I never did edit it. The review of "Graham's Magazine" was written by H. B. Hirst—a young poet of this city. Who is to write your life for "Graham"? It is a pity that so many of these biographies were entrusted to Mr. Griswold. He certainly lacks independence, or judgment, or both.

I have tried in vain to get a copy of your "Year's Life" in Philadelphia. If you have one, and could spare it, I would be much obliged.

Do write me again when you have leisure, and believe me,

Your most sincere friend,

EDGAR A. POE.

[Æt. 35]

To Mrs. Clemm

[arrival in new york]

New York, Sunday Morning,
April 7, just after breakfast, [1844.]

My dear Muddy,—

We have just this minute done breakfast, and I now sit down to write you about everything. I can't pay for the letter, because the P. O. won't be open to-day. In the first place we arrived safe at Walnut St. wharf. The driver wanted to make me pay a dollar, but I wouldn't. Then I had to pay a boy a levy to put the trunks in the baggage car. In the meantime I took Sis [Virginia] in the Depôt Hotel. It was only a quarter past six, and we had to wait till seven. We saw the "Ledger" and "Times" —nothing in either—a few words of no account in the "Chronicle." We started in good spirits, but did not get here until nearly three o'clock. We went in the cars to Amboy, about forty miles from N. York, and then took the steamboat the rest of the way. Sissy coughed none at all. When we got to the wharf it was raining hard. I left her on board the boat, after putting the trunks in the Ladies' cabin, and set off to buy an umbrella and look for a boarding-house. I met a man selling umbrellas, and bought one for twenty-five cents. Then I went up Greenwich St. and soon found a boarding-house. It is just before you get to Cedar St., on the west side going up—the left-hand side. It has brown stone steps, with a porch with brown pillars. "Morrison" is the name on the door. I made a bargain in a few minutes and then got a hack and went for Sis. I was not gone more than half an hour, and she was quite astonished to see me back so soon. She didn't expect me for an hour. There were two other ladies waiting on board—so she wasn't very lonely. When we got to the house we had to wait about half an hour before the room was ready. The house is old and looks buggy. [The letter is cut here for the signature on the other side.] the cheapest board I ever knew, taking into consideration the central situation and the *living*. I wish Kate [Catterina, the cat] could see it—she would faint. Last night, for supper,

we had the nicest tea you ever drank, strong and hot,—wheat bread and rye bread—cheese—tea—cakes (elegant), a great dish (two dishes) of elegant ham, and two of cold veal, piled up like a mountain and large slices—three dishes of the cakes and everything in the greatest profusion. No fear of starving here. The landlady seemed as if she couldn't press us enough, and we were at home directly. Her husband is living with her—a fat, good-natured old soul. There are eight or ten boarders—two or three of them ladies—two servants. For breakfast we had excellent-flavored coffee, hot and strong—not very clear and no great deal of cream—veal cutlets, elegant ham and eggs and nice bread and butter. I never sat down to a more plentiful or a nicer breakfast. I wish you could have seen the eggs—and the great dishes of meat. I ate the first hearty breakfast I have eaten since I left our little home. Sis is delighted, and we are both in excellent spirits. She has coughed hardly any and had no night sweat. She is now busy mending my pants which I tore against a nail. I went out last night and bought a skein of silk, a skein of thread, two buttons, a pair of slippers, and a tin pan for the stove. The fire kept in all night. We have now got four dollars and a half left. To-morrow I am going to try and borrow three dollars, so that I may have a fortnight to go upon. I feel in excellent spirits, and haven't drank a drop—so that I hope soon to get out of trouble. The very instant I scrape together enough money I will send it on. You can't imagine how much we both do miss you. Sissy had a hearty cry last night, because you and Catterina weren't here. We are resolved to get two rooms the first moment we can. In the meantime it is impossible we could be more comfortable or more at home than we are. It looks as if it were going to clear up now. Be sure and go to the P. O. and have my letters forwarded. As soon as I write Lowell's article, I will send it to you, and get you to get the money from Graham. Give our best love to C.

[Signature cut out.]

Be sure and take home the "Messenger" to Hirst. We hope to send for you *very* soon.

To General Hooker

["WHAT I NOW ASK OF YOU IS MILITARY SUCCESS"]

Executive Mansion, Washington, D. C.,
January 26, 1863.

Major-General Hooker.

General: I have placed you at the head of the Army of the Potomac. Of course I have done this upon what appear to me to be sufficient reasons, and yet I think it best for you to know that there are some things in regard to which I am not quite satisfied with you. I believe you to be a brave and skilful soldier, which of course I like. I also believe you do not mix politics with your profession, in which you are right. You have confidence in yourself, which is a valuable if not an indispensable quality. You are ambitious, which, within reasonable bounds, does good rather than harm; but I think that during General Burnside's command of the army you have taken counsel of your ambition and thwarted him as much as you could, in which you did a great wrong to the country and to a most meritorious and honorable brother officer. I have heard, in such a way as to believe it, of your recently saying that both the army and the government needed a dictator. Of course it was not for this, but in spite of it, that I have given you the command. Only those generals who gain successes can set up dictators. What I now ask of you is military success, and I will risk the dictatorship. The government will support you to the utmost of its ability, which is neither more nor less than it has done and will do for all commanders. I much fear that the spirit which you have aided to infuse into the army, of criticizing their commander and withholding confidence from him, will now turn upon you. I shall assist you as far as I can to put it down. Neither you nor Napoleon, if he were alive again, could get any good out of an army while such a spirit prevails in it; and now beware of rashness. Beware of rashness, but with energy and sleepless vigilance go forward and give us victories. Yours very truly,

A. Lincoln.

[Æt. 55] To General U. S. Grant

[expression of confidence]

Executive Mansion, Washington,
April 30, 1864.

Lieutenant-General Grant:

Not expecting to see you again before the spring campaign opens, I wish to express in this way my entire satisfaction with what you have done up to this time, so far as I understand it. The particulars of your plans I neither know nor seek to know. You are vigilant and self-reliant; and, pleased with this, I wish not to obtrude any constraints or restraints upon you. While I am very anxious that any great disaster or capture of our men in great numbers shall be avoided, I know these points are less likely to escape your attention than they would be mine. If there is anything wanting which is within my power to give, do not fail to let me know it. And now, with a brave army and a just cause, may God sustain you.

Yours very truly,
A. Lincoln.

[Æt. 55] To Mrs. Bixby

["the thanks of the republic"]

Executive Mansion, Washington,
November 21, 1864.

Mrs. Bixby, Boston, Massachusetts.

Dear Madam: I have been shown in the files of the War Department a statement of the Adjutant-General of Massachusetts that you are the mother of five sons who have died gloriously on the field of battle. I feel how weak and fruitless must be any words of mine which should attempt to beguile you from the grief of a loss so overwhelming. But I cannot refrain from tendering you the consolation that may be found in the thanks of the republic they died to save. I pray that our Heavenly Father may assuage the anguish of your bereavement, and leave you only the cherished memory of the loved and lost, and the solemn pride that must be yours to have laid so costly a sacrifice upon the altar of freedom.

Yours very sincerely and respectfully,
Abraham Lincoln.

1809–1883

To W. B. Donne

[shakespeare; life of coleridge]

[London, 17 Gloucester Street, Queen Square]

1834.

Dear Donne,

. . . I have been buying two Shakespeares, a second and third Folio—the second Folio pleases me much: and I can read him with a greater zest now. One had need of a big book to remember him by: for he is lost to the theatre: I saw Mr. Vandenhoff play Macbeth in a sad way a few nights ago: and such a set of dirty ragamuffins as the rest were could not disgrace any country barn. Manfred I have missed by some chance: and I believe "it was all for the best" as pious people say. The Theatre is bare beyond anything I ever saw: and one begins to hope that it has touched the bottom of its badness, and will rise again. I was looking the other day at Sir W. Davenant's alteration of Macbeth: who dies, saying, "Farewell, vain world: and that which is vainest in't, Ambition!"

Edgeworth, whom I think you remember at Cambridge, is come to live in town: and I see him often at the Museum. The want of books chiefly drove him from Italy: besides that he tells me he likes a constant change of scenes and ideas, and would be always about if he could. He is a very original man I think, and throws out much to be chewed and digested: but he is deficient in some elements that must combine to govern my love and admiration. He has much imagination of head, but none of heart: perhaps these are absurd distinctions: but I am no hand at these definitions. His great study is metaphysics: and Kant is his idol. He is rather without company in London, and I wish much to introduce him to such men as I know: but most of your Apostolic party who could best exchange ideas with him are not in town. He is full of his subjects, and only wants opponents to tilt at. . . .

The life of Coleridge is indeed an unsatisfactory thing: I believe that everybody thinks so. You seem to think that

it is purposely unsatisfactory, or rather dissatisfactory: but it seems to me to proceed from a kind of enervation in De Quincey. However, I don't know how he supports himself in other writings. . . .

To fill up my letter I send you a sonnet of C. Lamb's, out of his Album Verses—please to like it—"Leisure."

[Æt. 26]

To John Allen

[TENNYSON AT AMBLESIDE; OLD DIVINES]

Manchester, May 23, 1835.

Dear Allen,

I think that the fatal two months have elapsed, by which a letter shall become due to me from you. Ask Mrs. Allen if this is not so. Mind, I don't speak this upbraidingly, because I know that you didn't know where I was. I will tell you all about this by degrees. In the first place, I stayed at Mirehouse till the beginning of May, and then, going homeward, spent a week at Ambleside, which, perhaps you don't know, is on the shore of Winandermere. It was very pleasant there: though it was to be wished that the weather had been a little better. I have scarce done anything since I saw you but abuse the weather: but these four last days have made amends for all: and are, I hope, the beginning of summer at last. Alfred Tennyson stayed with me at Ambleside: Spedding was forced to go home, till the last two days of my stay there. I will say no more of Tennyson than that the more I have seen of him, the more cause I have to think him great. His little humours and grumpinesses were so droll, that I was always laughing: and was often put in mind (strange to say) of my little unknown friend, Undine—I must however say, further, that I felt what Charles Lamb describes, a sense of depression at times from the overshadowing of a so much more lofty intellect than my own: this (though it may seem vain to say so) I never experienced before, though I have often been with much greater intellects: but I could not be mistaken in the universality of his mind; and perhaps I have received some benefit in the now more

distinct consciousness of my dwarfishness. I think that you should keep all this to yourself, my dear Allen: I mean, that it is only to you that I would write so freely about myself. You know most of my secrets, and I am not afraid of entrusting even my vanities to so true a man. . . .

Pray, do not forget to say how the Freestone party are. My heart jumped to them, when I read in a guide book at Ambleside, that from Scawfell (a mountain in Westmoreland) you could see Snowdon. Perhaps you will not see the chain of ideas: but I suppose there was one, else I don't know how it was that I tumbled, as it were, from the very summit of Scawfell, upon the threshold of Freestone. The mind soon traverses Wales. I have not been reading very much—(as if you ever expected that I did!)—but I mean, not very much for me—some Dante, by the aid of a Dictionary: and some Milton—and some Wordsworth—and some selections from Jeremy Taylor, Barrow, &c., compiled by Basil Montagu—of course you know the book: it is published by Pickering. I do not think that it is very well done: but it has served to delight, and, I think, to instruct me much. Do you know South? He must be very great, I think. It seems to me that our old Divines will hereafter be considered our Classics—(in Prose, I mean)—I am not aware that any other nations have such books. A single selection from Jeremy Taylor is fine: but it requires a skilful hand to put many detached bits from him together: for a common editor only picks out the flowery, metaphorical, morsels: and so rather cloys: and gives quite a wrong estimate of the Authour, to those who had no previous acquaintance with him: for, rich as Taylor's illustrations, and grotesque as his images, are, no one keeps a grander proportion: he never huddles illustration upon the matter so as to overlay it, nor crowds images too thick together: which these Selections might make one unacquainted with him to suppose. This is always the fault of Selections: but Taylor is particularly liable to injury on this score. What a man he is! He has such a knowledge of the nature of man, and such powers of expressing its properties, that I sometimes feel as if he had had some exact counterpart of my own individual

character under his eye, when he lays open the depths of the heart, or traces some sin to its root. The eye of his portrait expresses this keen intuition: and I think I should less like to have stood with a lie on my tongue before him, than before any other I know of. . . .

I beg you to give my best remembrances to your lady, who may be always sure that in all I wish of well for you, she is included: so that I take less care to make mention of her separately. . . .

[Æt. 26]

To John Allen

[the poor laws; southey's "cowper"]

Boulge Hall, Woodbridge,
October 31, 1835.

Dear Allen,

I don't know what has come over me of late, that I have not written to you, nor any body else for several months. I am sure it is not from any decrease of affection towards you. I now begin a letter merely on the score of wanting one from you; to let me know how you are; and Mrs. Allen too, especially. I hope to hear good news of her. Many things have happened to you since I saw you: you may be Bishop, for anything I know. I have been in Suffolk ever since I saw you. We are at [last] come to settle at this place: and I have been enjoying capital health in my old native air. I meant to have come to London for the winter: but my sisters are here, and I do not like to leave them. This parish is a very small one: it scarce contains fifty people: but that next to it, Bredfield, has more than four hundred: and some very poor indeed. We hope to be of some use: but the new Poor Laws have begun to be set afoot, and we don't know who is to stop in his cottage, or who is to go to the Workhouse. How much depends upon the issue of this measure! I am no politician: but I fear that no political measure will ever adjust matters well between rich and poor. . . .

I have just read Southey's Life of Cowper; that is to say, the first Volume. It is not a book to be read by

every man at the fall of the leaf. It is a fearful book. Have you read it? Southey hits hard at Newton in the dark; which will give offence to many people: but I perfectly agree with him. At the same time, I think that Newton was a man of great power. Did you ever read his life by himself? Pray do, if you have not. His journal to his wife, written at sea, contains some of the most beautiful things I ever read: fine feeling in very fine English. . . .

Pray do write to me: a few lines soon are better than a three-decker a month hence: for I really want to know where and how you are: and so be a good boy for once in your life. Ever yours lovingly, E. F. G.

[Æt. 29]

To Bernard Barton

[CARLYLE'S "FRENCH REVOLUTION"; TENNYSON]

London, April, 1838.

Dear Sir,

John, who is going down into Suffolk, will I hope take this letter and despatch it to you properly. I write more on account of this opportunity than of anything I have to say: for I am very heavy indeed with a kind of Influenza, which has blocked up most of my senses, and put a wet blanket over my brains. This state of head has not been improved by trying to get through a new book much in fashion—Carlyle's French Revolution—written in a German style. An Englishman writes of French Revolutions in a German style. People say the book is very deep: but it appears to me that the meaning *seems* deep from lying under mystical language. There is no repose, nor equable movement in it: all cut up into short sentences, half reflective, half narrative; so that one labours through it as vessels do through what is called a short sea—small, contrary going waves caused by shallows, and straits, and meeting tides, &c. I like to sail before the wind over the surface of an even-rolling eloquence, like that of Bacon or the Opium Eater. There is also pleasant fresh water sailing with such writers as Addison; is there any *pond*-sailing in literature? that is,

drowsy, slow, and of small compass? Perhaps we may say, some Sermons. But this is only conjecture. Certainly Jeremy Taylor rolls along as majestically as any of them. We have had Alfred Tennyson here; very droll, and very wayward: and much sitting up of nights till two and three in the morning with pipes in our mouths: at which good hour we would get Alfred to give us some of his magic music, which he does between growling and smoking; and so to bed. All this has not cured my Influenza as you may imagine: but these hours shall be remembered long after the Influenza is forgotten.

I have bought scarce any new books or prints: and am not sorry to see that I want so little more. One large purchase I have made however, the Biographie Universelle, 53 octavo volumes. It contains everything, and is the very best thing of its kind, and so referred to by all historians, &c. Surely nothing is more pleasant than, when some name crosses one, to go and get acquainted with the owner of the name: and this Biographie really has found places for people whom one would have thought almost too small for so comprehensive a work—which sounds like a solecism, or Bull, does it not?

Now I must finish my letter: and a very stupid one it is. Here is a sentence of Warburton's that, I think, is very wittily expressed: though why I put it in here is not very discoverable. "The Church, like the Ark of Noah, is worth saving: not for the sake of the unclean beasts that almost filled it, and probably made most noise and clamour in it, but for the little corner of rationality, that was as much distressed by the stink within, as by the tempest without." Is it not good? It is out of his letters: and the best thing in them. It is also the best thing in mine.

With kind remembrances to Miss Barton, believe me

Yours very affectionately

E. FitzGerald.

[Æt. 31]

To W. H. Thompson

["carlyle's raving book about heroes"]

Boulge Hall, Woodbridge,
March 26, '41.

My dear Thompson,

. . . I had a long letter from Morton the other day—he is still luxuriating at Venice. Also a letter from Frederic Tennyson, who has been in Sicily &c. and is much distracted between enjoyment of those climates and annoyance from Fleas. These two men are to be at Rome together soon: so if any one wants to go to Rome, now is a good time. I wish I was there. F. Tennyson says that he and a party of Englishmen fought a cricket match with the crew of the Bellerophon on the *Parthenopæan hills* (query about the correctness of this—I quote from memory), and *sacked* the sailors by 90 runs. Is not this pleasant?—the notion of good English blood striving in worn out Italy—I like that such men as Frederic should be abroad: so strong, haughty, and passionate. They keep up the English character abroad. . . . Have you read poor Carlyle's raving book about heroes? Of course you have, or I would ask you to buy my copy. I don't like to live with it in the house. It smoulders. He ought to be laughed at a little. But it is pleasant to retire to the Tale of a Tub, Tristram Shandy, and Horace Walpole, after being tossed on his canvas waves. This is blasphemy. Dibdin Pitt of the Coburg could enact one of his heroes. . . .

[Æt. 33]

To Bernard Barton

[naseby battle-field]

[Naseby], Septr. 22, '42.

My dear Barton,

The pictures are left all ready packed up in Portland Place, and shall come down with me, whenever that desirable event takes place. In the mean while here I am as before: but having received a long and interesting

letter from Carlyle asking information about this Battle field, I have trotted about rather more to ascertain names of places, positions &c. After all he will make a mad book. I have just seen some of the bones of a dragoon and his horse who were found foundered in a morass in the field—poor dragoon, much dismembered by time: his less worthy members having been left in the owner's summer-house for the last twenty years have disappeared one by one: but his skull is kept safe in the hall: not a bad skull neither: and in it some teeth yet holding, and *a bit of the iron heel of his boot,* put into the skull by way of convenience. This is what Sir Thomas Browne calls "making a man act his Antipodes." I have got a fellow to dig at one of the great general graves in the field: and he tells me to-night that he has come to bones: to-morrow I will select a neat specimen or two. In the mean time let the full harvest moon wonder at them as they lie turned up after lying hid 2400 revolutions of hers. Think of that warm 14th of June when the Battle was fought, and they fell pell-mell: and then the country people came and buried them so shallow that the stench was terrible, and the putrid matter oozed over the ground for several yards: so that the cattle were observed to eat those places very close for some years after. Every one to his taste, as one might well say to any woman who kissed the cow that pastured there.

Friday, 23rd. We have dug at a place, as I said, and made such a trench as would hold a dozen fellows: whose remains positively make up the mould. The bones nearly all rotted away, except the teeth which are quite good. At the bottom lay the *form* of a perfect skeleton: most of the bones gone, but the pressure distinct in the clay: the thigh and leg bones yet extant: the skull a little pushed forward, as if there were scanty room. We also tried some other reputed graves, but found nothing: indeed it is not easy to distinguish what are graves from old marl-pits &c. I don't care for all this bone-rummaging myself: but the identification of the graves identifies also where the greatest heat of the battle was. Do you wish for a tooth?

As I began this antiquarian account in a letter to you, so I have finished it, that you may mention it to my

Papa, who perhaps will be amused at it. Two farmers insisted on going out exploring with me all day: one a very solid fellow who talks like the justices in Shakespeare: but who certainly was inspired in finding out this grave: the other a Scotchman full of intelligence, who proposed the flesh-soil for manure for turnips. The old Vicar, whose age reaches half-way back to the day of the Battle, stood tottering over the verge of the trench. Carlyle has shewn great sagacity in guessing at the localities from the vague descriptions of contemporaries: and his short *pasticcio* of the battle is the best I have seen. But he will spoil all by making a demi-god of Cromwell, who certainly was so far from wise that he brought about the very thing he fought to prevent—the restoration of an unrestricted monarchy.

[Æt. 34]

To Frederic Tennyson

[a sunday letter]

Boulge Hall, Woodbridge,
Sunday, Dec. 10, 1843.

Dear Frederic,

Either you wrote me word yourself, or some one told me, that you meant to winter at Florence. So I shall direct to the Poste Restante there. You see I am not settled at the Florence of Suffolk, called Ipswich, yet: but I am perhaps as badly off; being in the most dull country house quite alone; a grey mist that seems teeming with half formed snow, all over the landscape before my windows. It is also Sunday morning: ten of the clock by the chime now sounding from the stables. I have fed on bread and milk (a dreadfully opaque diet) and I await the morning church in humble hope. It will begin in half an hour. We keep early hours in the country. So you will be able to measure my aptitude and fullness for letter writing by the quantity written now, before I bolt off for hat, gloves, and prayerbook. I always put on my thickest great coat to go to our Church in: as fungi grow in great numbers about the communion table. And now, to turn away from Boulge, I must tell

you that I went up to London a month ago to see old Thackeray, who had come there to have his eyes doctored. I stayed with him ten days and we were as usual together. Alfred came up "in transitu" from Boxley to Cheltenham; he looked, and said he was, ill: I have never seen him so hopeless: and I am really anxious to know how he is. . . . I remember the days of the summer when you and I were together, quarreling and laughing —these I remember with pleasure. Our trip to Gravesend has left a perfume with me. I can get up with you on that everlastingly stopping coach on which we tried to travel from Gravesend to Maidstone that Sunday morning: worn out with it, we got down at an inn, and then got up on another—and an old smiling fellow passed us holding out his hat—and you said, "That old fellow must go about as Homer did"—and numberless other turns of road and humour, which sometimes pass before me as I lie in bed. . . . Now before I turn over, I will go and see about Church, as I hear no bell, pack myself up as warmly as I can, and be off. So good-bye till twelve o'clock. . . . 'Tis five minutes past twelve by the stable clock: so I saw as I returned from Church through the garden. Parson and Clerk got through the service see-saw, like two men in a sawpit. In the garden I see the heads of the snowdrops and crocuses just out of the earth. Another year with its same flowers and topics to open upon us. Shenstone somewhere sings

> Tedious again to mark the drizzling day,
> Again to trace the same sad tracts of snow:
> Or, lull'd by vernal airs, again survey
> The selfsame hawthorn bud, and cowslips blow.

I rely on you and all your family sympathizing in this. So do I sometimes—anyhow, people complimenting each other on the approach of Spring and such like felicitations are very tiresome. Our very year is of a paltry diameter. But this is not proper language for Mark Tapley—whose greatest bore just now is having a bad pen—but the letter is ended. So he is jolly and yours as ever.

[Æt. 35]

To Bernard Barton

[a kitten; carlyle; a preacher]

19 Charlotte St., April 11, '44.

Dear Barton,

I am still indignant at this nasty place London. Thackeray, whom I came up to see, went off to Brighton the night after I arrived, and has not reappeared: but I must wait some time longer for him. Thank Miss Barton much for the *kit;* if it is but a kit: my old woman is a great lover of cats, and hers has just *kitted,* and a wretched little blind puling tabby lizard of a thing was to be saved from the pail for me: but if Miss Barton's is *a kit,* I will gladly have it: and my old lady's shall be disposed of—not to the pail. Oh rus, quando te aspiciam? Construe that, Mr. Barton.—I am going to send down my pictures to Boulge, if I can secure them: they are not quite secure at present. If they vanish, I snap my fingers at them, Magi and all—there is a world (alas!) elsewhere beyond pictures—Oh, oh, oh, oh—

I smoked a pipe with Carlyle yesterday. We ascended from his dining room carrying pipes and tobacco up through two stories of his house, and got into a little dressing room near the roof: there we sat down: the window was open and looked out on nursery gardens, their almond trees in blossom, and beyond, bare walls of houses, and over these, roofs and chimneys, and roofs and chimneys, and here and there a steeple, and whole London crowned with darkness gathering behind like the illimitable resources of a dream. I tried to persuade him to leave the accursed den, and he wished—but—but—perhaps he *didn't* wish on the whole.

When I get back to Boulge I shall recover my quietude, which is now all in a ripple. But it is a shame to talk of such things. So Churchyard has caught another Constable. Did he get off our Debach boy that set the shed on fire? Ask him that. Canst thou not minister to a mind diseased &c.

A cloud comes over Charlotte Street and seems as if it were sailing softly on the April wind to fall in a blessed shower upon the lilac buds and thirsty anemones some-

where in Essex; or, who knows? perhaps at Boulge. Out will run Mrs. Faiers, and with red arms and face of woe haul in the struggling windows of the cottage, and make all tight. Beauty Bob will cast a bird's eye out at the shower, and bless the useful wet. Mr. Loder will observe to the farmer for whom he is doing up a dozen of Queen's Heads that it will be of great use: and the farmer will agree that his young barleys wanted it much. The German Ocean will dimple with innumerable pin points, and porpoises rolling near the surface sneeze with unusual pellets of fresh water—

> Can such things be,
> And overcome us like a summer cloud,
> Without our special wonder?

Oh this wonderful wonderful world, and we who stand in the middle of it are all in a maze, except poor Matthews of Bedford, who fixes his eyes upon a wooden Cross and has no misgiving whatever. When I was at his chapel on Good Friday, he called at the end of his grand sermon on some of the people to say merely this, that they believed Christ had redeemed them: and first one got up and in sobs declared she believed it: and then another, and then another—I was quite overset:—all poor people: how much richer than all who fill the London Churches. Theirs is the kingdom of Heaven!

This is a sad farrago. Farewell.

[Æt. 35]

To Frederic Tennyson

["my way of life"; constable]

Boulge, Woodbridge, May 24, '44.

My dear Frederic,

I think you mean never to write to me again. But you should, for I enjoy your letters much for years after I have got them. They tell me all I should know of Italy, besides many other good things. I received one letter from you from Florence, and as you gave me no particular direction, I wrote to you at the Poste Res-

tante there. I am now inditing this letter on the same venture. As my location is much more permanent, I command you to respond to me the very day you get this, warmed into such faint inspiration as my turnip radiance can kindle. You have seen a turnip lantern perhaps. Well, here I continue to exist: have broken my rural vegetation by one month in London, where I saw all the old faces—some only in passing, however—saw as few sights as possible, leaving London two days before the Exhibition opened. This is not out of moroseness or love of singularity: but I really supposed there could be nothing new: and therefore the best way would [be] to come new to it oneself after three or four years absence. I see in Punch a humourous catalogue of supposed pictures; Prince Albert's favorite spaniel and bootjack, the Queen's Macaw with a Muffin &c., by Landseer &c., in which I recognize Thackeray's fancy. He is in full vigour play and pay in London, writing in a dozen reviews, and a score of newspapers: and while health lasts he sails before the wind. I have not heard of Alfred since March. . . . Spedding devotes his days to Lord Bacon in the British Museum: his nights to the usual profligacy. . . . My dear Frederic, you must select some of your poems and publish them: we want some bits of strong genuine imagination to help put to flight these —— &c. Publish a book of fragments, if nothing else but single lines, or else the whole poems. When will you come to England and do it? I dare say I should have stayed longer in London had you been there: but the wits were too much for me. Not Spedding, mind: who is a dear fellow. But one finds few in London *serious* men: I mean *serious* even in fun: with a true purpose and character whatsoever it may be. London melts away all individuality into a common lump of cleverness. I am amazed at the humour and worth and noble feeling in the country, however much railroads have mixed us up with metropolitan civilization. I can still find the heart of England beating healthily down here though no one will believe it.

You know my way of life so well that I need not describe it to you, as it has undergone no change since I saw you. I read of mornings; the same old books over

and over again, having no command of new ones: walk with my great black dog of an afternoon, and at evening sit with open windows, up to which China roses climb, with my pipe, while the blackbirds and thrushes begin to rustle bedwards in the garden, and the nightingale to have the neighbourhood to herself. We have had such a spring (bating the last ten days) as would have satisfied even you with warmth. And such verdure! white clouds moving over the new fledged tops of oak trees, and acres of grass striving with buttercups. How old to tell of, how new to see! I believe that Leslie's Life of Constable (a very charming book) has given me a fresh love of Spring. Constable loved it above all seasons: he hated Autumn. When Sir G. Beaumont who was of the old classical taste asked him if he did not find it difficult to place *his brown tree* in his pictures, "Not at all," said C., "I never put one in at all." And when Sir George was crying up the tone of the old masters' landscapes, and quoting an *old violin* as the proper tone of colour for a picture, Constable got up, took an old Cremona, and laid it down on the sunshiny grass. You would like the book. In defiance of all this, I have hung my room with pictures, like very old fiddles indeed: but I agree with Sir George and Constable both. I like pictures that are not like nature. I can have nature better than any picture by looking out of my window. Yet I respect the man who tries to paint up to the freshness of earth and sky. Constable did not wholly achieve what he tried at: and perhaps the old masters chose a soberer scale of things as more within the compass of lead paint. To paint dew with lead!

I also plunge away at my old Handel of nights, and delight in the Allegro and Penseroso, full of pomp and fancy. What a pity Handel could not have written music to some great Masque, such as Ben Jonson or Milton would have written, if they had known of such a musician to write for.

[Æt. 35]

To Frederic Tennyson

["A LITTLE MORE FOLDING OF THE HANDS"]

Boulge, Woodbridge, Oct. 10, '44.

My dear Frederic,

You will think I have wholly cut you. But I wrote half a letter to you three months ago; and mislaid it; spent some time in looking for it, always hoping; and then some more time despairing; and we all know how time goes when [we] have got a thing to do which we are rather lazy about doing. As for instance, getting up in a morning. Not that writing a letter to you is so bad as getting up; but it is not easy for mortal man who has heard, seen, done, and thought, nothing since he last wrote, to fill one of these big foreign sheets full as a foreign letter ought to be. I am now returned to my dull home here after my usual pottering about in the midland counties of England. A little Bedfordshire—a little Northamptonshire—a little more folding of the hands—the same faces—the same fields—the same thoughts occurring at the same turns of road—this is all I have to tell of; nothing at all added—but the summer gone. My garden is covered with yellow and brown leaves; and a man is digging up the garden beds before my window, and will plant some roots and bulbs for next year. My parsons come and smoke with me &c. "The round of life from hour to hour"—alluding doubtless to a mill-horse. Alfred is reported to be still at Park House, where he has been sojourning for two months, I think; but he never writes me a word. Hydropathy has done its worst; he writes the names of his friends in water. . . . I spent two days in London with old Morton about five weeks ago; and pleasant days they were. The rogue bewitches me with his wit and honest speech. He also stayed some while at Park House, while Alfred was there, and managed of course to frighten the party occasionally with some of his sallies. He often writes to me; and very good his letters are all of them.

When do you mean to write me another? Morton told me in his last that he had heard from Brotherton you were gone, or going, to Naples. I dare say this sheet of

mine will never get to your hands. But if it does, let me hear from you. Is Italy becoming stale to you? Are you going to Cairo for fresh sensations? Thackeray went off in a steamboat about the time the French were before Mogadore; he was to see those coasts and to visit Jerusalem! Titmarsh at Jerusalem will certainly be an era in Christianity. But I suppose he will soon be back now. Spedding is yet in his Highlands, I believe, considering Grouse and Bacon.

I expect to run up to London some time during the winter, just to tell over old friends' faces and get a sup of music and painting. I have bought very few more pictures lately; and [heard] no music but Mendelssohn's M. Night's Dream. The overture, which was published long ago, is the best part; but there is a very noble triumphal march also.

Now I feel just in the same fix as I did in that sheet of paper whose fate is uncertain. But if I don't put in a word more, yet this shall go, I am determined. Only consider how it is a matter of necessity that I should have nothing to say. If you could see this place of Boulge! You who sit and survey marble palaces rising out of cypress and olive. There is a dreadful vulgar ballad, composed by Mr. Balfe, and sung with the most unbounded applause by Miss Rainforth,

"I dreamt that I dwelt in marble Halls,"

which is sung and organed at every corner in London. I think you may imagine what kind of flowing 6/8 time of the last degree of imbecility it is. The words are written by Mr. Bunn! Arcades ambo.

I say we shall see you over in England before long: for I rather think you want an Englishman to quarrel with sometimes. I mean quarrel in the sense of a good strenuous difference of opinion, supported on either side by occasional outbursts of spleen. Come and let us try. You used to irritate my vegetable blood sometimes.

[Æt. 35]

To Frederic Tennyson

["A TALENT FOR DULLNESS"; SENECA; THE SOUND OF THE SEA]

Boulge, Woodbridge, Dec. 8, '44.

My dear Frederic,

What is a poor devil to do? You tell me quite truly that my letters have not two ideas in them, and yet you tell me to write my two ideas as soon as I can. So indeed it is so far easy to write down one's two ideas, if they are not very abstruse ones; but then what the devil encouragement is it to a poor fellow to expose his nakedness so? All I can say is, to say again that if you lived in this place, you would not write so long a letter as you have done, full of capital description and all good things; though without any compliment I am sure you would write a better than I shall. But you see the original fault in me is that I choose to be in such a place as this at all; that argues certainly a talent for dullness which no situation nor intercourse of men could much improve. It is true; I really do like to sit in this doleful place with a good fire, a cat and dog on the rug, and an old woman in the kitchen. This is all my live stock. The house is yet damp as last year; and the great event of this winter is my putting up a trough round the eaves to carry off the wet. There was discussion whether the trough should be of iron or of zinc: iron dear and lasting; zinc the reverse. It was decided for iron; and accordingly iron is put up.

Why should I not live in London and see the world? you say. Why then *I* say as before, I don't like it. I think the dullness of country people is better than the impudence of Londoners; and the fresh cold and wet of our clay fields better than a fog that stinks *per se;* and this room of mine, clean at all events, better than a dirty room in Charlotte St. If you, Morton, and Alfred, were more in London, I should be there more; but now there is but Spedding and Allen whom I care a straw about. I have written two notes to Alfred to ask him just to notify his existence to me; but you know he is obstinate on that point. I heard from Carlyle that he (Alfred) had passed an evening at Chelsea much to C's delight;

who has opened the gates of his Valhalla to let Alfred in. Thackeray is at Malta, where I am told he means to winter. . . .

Old Seneca, I have no doubt, was a great humbug in deed, and his books have plenty of it in word; but he had got together a vast deal of what was not humbug from others; and, as far as I see, the old philosophers are available now as much as two thousand years back. Perhaps you will think that is not saying much. Don't suppose I think it good philosophy in myself to keep here out of the world, and sport a gentle Epicurism; I do not; I only follow something of a natural inclination, and know not if I could do better under a more complex system. It is very smooth sailing hitherto down here. No velvet waistcoat and ever-lustrous pumps to be considered; no bon mots got up; no information necessary. There is a pipe for the parsons to smoke, and quite as much bon mots, literature, and philosophy as they care for without any trouble at all. If we could but feed our poor! It is now the 8th of December; it has blown a most desperate East wind, all razors; a wind like one of those knives one sees at shops in London, with 365 blades all drawn and pointed; the wheat is all sown; the fallows cannot be ploughed. What are all the poor folks to do during the winter? And they persist in having the same enormous families they used to do; a woman came to me two days [ago] who had seventeen children! What farmers are to employ all these? What landlord can find room for them? The law of generation must be repealed. The London press does nothing but rail at us poor country folks for our cruelty. I am glad they do so; for there is much to be set right. But I want to know if the Editor of the Times is more attentive to his devils, their wives and families, than our squires and squiresses and parsons are to their fellow parishioners. Punch also assumes a tone of virtuous satire, from the mouth of Mr. Douglas Jerrold! It is easy to sit in arm chairs at a club in Pall Mall and rail on the stupidity and brutality of those in High Suffolk.

Come, I have got more than two ideas into this sheet; but I don't know if you won't dislike them worse than mere nothing. But I was determined to fill my letter.

Yes, you are to know that I slept at Woodbridge last night, went to church there this morning, where every one sat with a purple nose, and heard a dismal well-meant sermon; and the organ blew us out with one grand idea at all events, one of old Handel's Coronation Anthems; that I dined early, also in Woodbridge; and walked up here with a tremendous East wind blowing sleet in my face from over the German Sea, that I found your letter when I entered my room; and reading it through, determined to spin you off a sheet incontinently, and lo! here it is! Now or never! I shall now have my tea in, and read over your letter again while at it. You are quite right in saying that Gravesend excursions with you do me good. When did I doubt it? I remember them with great pleasure; few of my travels so much so. I like a short journey in good company; and I like you all the better for your Englishman's humours. One doesn't find such things in London; something more like it here in the country, where every one, with whatever natural stock of intellect endowed, at least grows up his own way, and flings his branches about him, not stretched on the espalier of London dinner-table company.

P.S. Next morning. Snow over the ground. We have our wonders of inundation in Suffolk also, I can tell you. For three weeks ago such floods came, that an old woman was carried off as she was retiring from a beer house about 9 p.m., and drowned. She was probably half seas over before she left the beer house.

And three nights ago I looked out at about ten o'clock at night, before going to bed. It seemed perfectly still; frosty, and the stars shining bright. I heard a continuous moaning sound, which I knew to be, not that of an infant exposed, or female ravished, but of the sea, more than ten miles off! What little wind there was carried to us the murmurs of the waves circulating round these coasts so far over a flat country. But people here think that this sound so heard is not from the waves that break, but a kind of prophetic voice from the body of the sea itself announcing great gales. Sure enough we have got them, however heralded. Now I say that all this shows that we in this Suffolk are not so completely given over

to prose and turnips as some would have us. I always said that being near the sea, and being able to catch a glimpse of it from the tops of hills, and of houses, redeemed Suffolk from dulness; and at all events that our turnip fields, dull in themselves, were at least set all round with an undeniably poetic element. And so I see Arnold says; he enumerates five inland counties as the only parts of England for which nothing could be said in praise. Not that I agree with him there neither; I cannot allow the valley of the Ouse about which some of my pleasantest recollections hang to be without its great charm. W. Browne, whom you despised, is married, and I shall see but little of him for the future. I have laid by my rod and line by the willows of the Ouse forever. "He is married and cannot come." This change is the true meaning of those verses,

> Friend after friend departs;
> Who has not lost a friend?

and so on. If I were conscious of being steadfast and good humoured enough I would marry to-morrow. But a humourist is best by himself.

[Æt. 36]

To Frederic Tennyson

["these painters"; "the great garden band"]

Boulge, Woodbridge, June 12, '45.

Dear Frederic,

Though I write from Boulge you are not to suppose I have been here ever since I last wrote to you. On the contrary, I am but just returned from London, where I spent a month, and saw all the sights and all the people I cared to see. But what am I to tell you of them? Spedding, you know, does not change: he is now the same that he was fourteen years old when I first knew him at school more than twenty years ago; wise, calm, bald, combining the best qualities of Youth and Age. And then as to things seen; you know that one Exhibition tells another, and one Panorama certifieth another &c. If you want to know something of the Exhibition however, read Fraser's Magazine for this month; there Thackeray

has a paper on the matter, full of fun. I met Stone in the street the other day; he took me by the button, and told me in perfect sincerity, and with increasing warmth, how, though he loved old Thackeray, yet these yearly out-speakings of his sorely tired him; not on account of himself (Stone), but on account of some of his friends, Charles Landseer, Maclise &c. Stone worked himself up to such a pitch under the pressure of forced calmness that he at last said Thackeray would get himself horse-whipped one day by one of these infuriated Apelleses. At this I, who had partly agreed with Stone that ridicule, though true, needs not always to be spoken, began to laugh: and told him two could play at that game. These painters cling together, and bolster each other up, to such a degree, that they really have persuaded themselves that anyone who ventures to laugh at one of their drawings, exhibited publickly for the express purpose of criticism, insults the whole corps. In the mean while old Thackeray laughs at all this; and goes on in his own way; writing hard for half a dozen Reviews and Newspapers all the morning; dining, drinking, and talking of a night; managing to preserve a fresh colour and perpetual flow of spirits under a wear-and-tear of thinking and feeding that would have knocked up any other man I know two years ago, at least. . . .

Alfred was in London the first week of my stay there. He was looking well, and in good spirits; and had got two hundred lines of a new poem in a butcher's book. He went down to Eastbourne in Sussex; where I believe he now is. He and I made a plan to go to the coast of Cornwall or Wales this summer; but I suppose we shall manage never to do it. I find I must go to Ireland; which I had not intended to do this year. . . .

Now I have told you all my London news. You will not hear of my Cottage and Garden; so now I will shut up shop and have done. We have had a dismal wet May; but now June is recompensing us for all, and Dr. Blow may be said to be leading the great Garden Band in full chorus. This is a pun, which, profound in itself, you must not expect to enjoy at first reading. I am not [sure] that I am myself conscious of the full meaning of it. I know it is very hot weather; the distant woods steam-

ing blue under the noonday sun. I suppose you are living without clothes in wells, where you are. Remember me to your brothers; write soon; and believe me ever yours,

E. FitzGerald.

As to going to Italy, alas! I have less call to do that than ever: I never shall go. You must come over here about your Railroad land.

[Æt. 38]

To Samuel Laurence

[A portrait of a quaker poet]

Geldestone Hall, Beccles,
[June 20, 1847.]

My dear Laurence,—

I have had another letter from the Bartons asking about your advent. In fact Barton's daughter is anxious for her Father's [portrait] to be done, and done this year. He is now sixty-three; and it won't do, you know, for grand-climacterical people to procrastinate—nay, to *pro-annuate*—which is a new, and, for all I see, a very bad word. But, be this as it may, do you come down to Woodbridge this summer if you can; and that you can, I doubt not; since it is no great things out of your way to or from Norwich.

The means to get to Ipswich are—A steamboat will bring you for five shillings (a very pretty sail) from the Custom House to Ipswich, the Orwell steamer; going twice a week, and heard of directly in the fishy latitudes of London Bridge. Or, a railroad brings you for the same sum; if you will travel third class, which I sometimes do in fine weather. I should recommend *that;* the time being so short, so certain; and no eating and drinking by the way, as must be in a steamer. At Ipswich, I pick you up with the washerwoman's pony and take you to Woodbridge. There Barton sits with the tea already laid out; and Miss about to manage the urn; plain, agreeable people. At Woodbridge too is my little friend Churchyard, with whom we shall sup off toasted cheese and porter. Then, last and not least, the sweet retirement of Boulge: where the Graces and Muses &c.

I write thus much because my friends seem anxious; my friend, I mean, Miss Barton: for Barton pretends he dreads having his portrait done; which is "my eye." So come and do it. He is a generous, worthy, simple-hearted, fellow: worth ten thousand better wits. Then you shall see all the faded tapestry of country town life: London jokes worn threadbare; third rate accomplishments infinitely prized; scandal removed from Dukes and Duchesses to the Parson, the Banker, the Commissioner of Excise, and the Attorney.

Let me hear from you soon that you are coming. I shall return to Boulge the end of this week.

P.S.—Come if you can the latter part of the week; when the Quaker is most at leisure. There is a daily coach from Woodbridge to Norwich.

[Æt. 38]

To Samuel Laurence

["WORDSWORTH—OR SKIDDAW, OR ANY OF THE BEAUTIES?"]

Boulge, Woodbridge,
[30 Jan., 1848.]

My dear Laurence,—

How are you—how are you getting on? A voice from the tombs thus addresses you; respect the dead and answer. Barton is well; that is, I left him well on Friday; but he was just going off to attend a Quaker's funeral in the snow: whether he has survived that, I don't know. To-morrow is his Birth-day: and I am going (if he be alive) to help him to celebrate it. His portrait has been hung (under my directions) over the mantel-piece in his sitting room, with a broad margin of some red stuff behind it, to set it off. You may turn up your nose at all this; but let me tell you it is considered one of the happiest contrivances ever adopted in Woodbridge. Nineteen people out of twenty like the portrait much; the twentieth, you may be sure, is a man of no taste at all.

I hear you were for a long time in Cumberland. Did you paint a waterfall—or old Wordsworth—or Skiddaw, or any of the beauties? Did you see anything so inviting to the pencil as the river Deben? When are you

coming to see us again? Churchyard relies on your coming; but then he is a very sanguine man, and, though a lawyer, wonderfully confident in the promises of men. How are all your family? You see I have asked you some questions; so you must answer them; and believe me yours truly,

E. FitzGerald.

[Æt. 39]

To Frederic Tennyson

[spedding; oratorios; "vanity fair"]

Boulge, May 4, 1848.

My dear Frederic,—

When you talk of two idle men not taking the trouble to keep up a little intercourse by letters, you do not, in conscience, reflect upon me; who, you know, am very active in answering almost by return of post. It is some six months since you must have got my last letter, full of most instructive advice concerning my namesake; of whom, and of which, you say nothing. How much has he borrowed of you? Is he now living on the top of your hospitable roof? Do you think him the most ill-used of men? I see great advertisements in the papers about your great Grimsby Railway. . . . Does it pay? does it pay all but you who live only on the fine promises of the lawyers and directors engaged in it? You know England has had a famous winter of it for commercial troubles: my family has not escaped the agitation: I even now doubt if I must not give up my daily two-pennyworth of cream and take to milk: and give up my Spectator and Athenæum. I don't trouble myself much about all this: for, unless the kingdom goes to pieces by national bankruptcy, I shall probably have enough to live on: and, luckily, every year I want less: What do you think of my not going up to London this year; to see exhibitions, to hear operas, and so on! Indeed I do not think I shall go: and I have no great desire to go. I hear of nothing new in any way worth going up for. I have never yet heard the famous Jenny Lind, whom all the world raves about. Spedding is especially mad about her, I understand: and, after that, is

it not best for weaker vessels to keep out of her way? Night after night is that bald head seen in one particular position in the Opera house, in a stall; the miserable man has forgotten Bacon and philosophy, and goes after strange women. There is no doubt this lady is a wonderful singer; but I will not go into hot crowds till another Pasta comes; I have heard no one since her worth being crushed for. And to perform in one's head one of Handel's choruses is better than most of the Exeter Hall performances. I went to hear Mendelssohn's Elijah last spring: and found it wasn't at all worth the trouble. Though very good music it is not original: Haydn much better. I think the day of Oratorios is gone, like the day for painting Holy Familys &c. But we cannot get tired of what has been done in Oratorios more than we can get tired of Raffaelle. Mendelssohn is really original and beautiful in *romantic* music: witness his Midsummer Night's Dream, and Fingal's Cave.

I had a note from Alfred three months ago. He was then in London: but is now in Ireland, I think, adding to his new poem, the Princess. Have you seen it? I am considered a great heretic for abusing it; it seems to me a wretched waste of power at a time of life when a man ought to be doing his best; and I almost feel hopeless about Alfred now. I mean, about his doing what he was born to do. . . . On the other hand, Thackeray is progressing greatly in his line: he publishes a Novel in numbers—Vanity Fair—which began dull, I thought: but gets better every number, and has some very fine things indeed in it. He is become a great man I am told: goes to Holland House, and Devonshire House: and for some reason or other, will not write a word to me. But I am sure this is not because he is asked to Holland House. Dickens has fallen off in his last novel, just completed; but there are wonderful things in it too. Do you ever get a glimpse of any of these things?

As to public affairs, they are so wonderful that one does not know where to begin. If England maintains her own this year, she must have the elements of long lasting in her. I think People begin to wish we had no more to do with Ireland: but the Whigs will never listen to a doctrine which was never heard of in Holland House.

I am glad Italy is free: and surely there is nothing for her now but a Republic. It is well to stand by old kings who have done well by us: but it is too late in the day to *begin* Royalty.

If anything could tempt me so far as Italy, it would certainly be your presence in Florence. But I boggle about going twenty miles, and *cui bono?* deadens me more and more.

July 2. All that precedes was written six weeks ago, when I was obliged to go up to London on business. . . . I saw Alfred, and the rest of the sçavans. Thackeray is a great man: goes to Devonshire House &c.: and *his* book (which is capital) is read by the Great: and will, I hope, do them good. I heard but little music: the glorious Acis and Galatea; and the redoubtable Jenny Lind, for the first time. I was disappointed in her: but am told this is all my fault. As to naming her in the same Olympiad with great old Pasta, I am sure that is ridiculous. The Exhibition is like most others you have seen; worse perhaps. There is an "Aaron" and a "John the Baptist" by Etty far worse than the Saracen's Head on Ludgate Hill. Moore is turned Picture dealer: and that high Roman virtue in which he indulged is likely to suffer a Picture-dealer's change, I think. Carlyle writes in the Examiner about Ireland: raves and foams, but has nothing to propose. Spedding prospers with Bacon. Alfred seemed to me in fair plight: much dining out: and his last Poem is well liked I believe. Morton is still at Lisbon, I believe also: but I have not written to him, nor heard from him. And now, my dear Frederic, I must shut up. Do not neglect to write to me sometimes. Alfred said you ought to be in England about your Grimsby Land.

[Æt. 50]

To W. F. Pollock

[miscellaneous reading]

10 Marine Terrace,
Lowestoft,
Febr. 23, '60.

My dear Pollock,—

"Me voilà ici" still! having weathered it out so long. No bad Place, I assure you, though you who are accustomed to Pall Mall, Clubs &c. wouldn't like it. Mudie finds one out easily: and the London Library too: and altogether I can't complain of not getting such drowsy Books as I want. Hakluyt lasted a long while: then came Captain Cook, whom I hadn't read since I was a Boy, and whom I was very glad to see again. But he soon evaporates in his large Type Quartos. I can hardly manage Emerson Tennent's Ceylon: a very dry Catalogue Raisonée of the Place. A little Essay of DeQuincey's gave me a better idea of it (as I suppose) in some twenty or thirty pages. Anyhow, I prefer Lowestoft, considering the Snakes, Sandleaches, Mosquitos &c. I suppose Russell's Indian Diary is over-coloured: but I feel sure it's true in the main: and he has the Art to make one feel in the thick of it; quite enough in the Thick, however. Sir C. Napier came here to try and get the Beachmen to enlist in the Naval Reserve. Not one would go: they won't give up their Independence: and so really half starve here during Winter. Then Spring comes and they go and catch the Herrings which, if left alone, would multiply by millions by Autumn: and so kill their Golden Goose. They are a strange set of Fellows. I think a Law ought to be made against their Spring Fishing: more important, for their own sakes, than Game Laws.

I laid out half a crown on your Fraser: and liked much of it very much: especially the Beginning about the Advantage the Novelist has over the Playwriter. A little too much always about Miss Austen, whom yet I think quite capital in a Circle I have found quite unendurable to walk in. Thackeray's first Number was famous I thought: his own little Roundabout Paper so pleasant: but

the Second Number; I say, lets the Cockney in already: about Hogarth: Lewes is vulgar: and I don't think one can care much for Thackeray's Novel.* He is always talking so of himself, too. I have been very glad to find I could take to a Novel again, in Trollope's Barchester Towers &c.: not perfect, like Miss Austen: but then so much wider Scope: and perfect enough to make me feel I know the People though caricatured or carelessly drawn. I doubt if you can read my writing here: or whether it will be worth your Pains to do so. If you can, or can not, one Day write me a Line which I will read. I suppose when the Fields and Hedges begin to grow green I shall move a little further inland to be among them.

[Æt. 54] To W. B. Donne

["My new boat"]

Market Hill, Woodbridge,
Sat., July 18, '63.

My dear Donne,—

. . . I can hardly tell you whether I am much pleased with my new Boat; for I hardly know myself. She is (as I doubted would be from the first) rather awkward in our narrow River; but then she was to be a good Sea-boat; and I don't know but she is; and will be better in all ways when we have got her in proper trim. Yesterday we gave her what they call *"a tuning"* in a rather heavy swell round Orford Ness: and she did well without a reef &c. But, now all is got, I don't any the more want to go far away by Sea, any more than by Land; having no curiosity left for other Places, and glad to get back to my own Chair and Bed after three or four Days' Absence. So long as I get on the Sea from time to time, it is much the same to me whether off Aldbro' or Penzance. And I find I can't sleep so well on board as I used to do thirty years ago: and not to get one's Sleep, you know, indisposes one more or less for the Day. However, we talk of Dover, Folkestone, Holland &c. which will give one's sleeping Talents a *tuning.*

* *The Virginians.*

[Æt. 54]

To George Crabbe

[an unsatisfactory trip to holland]

Woodbridge, August 4, [1863.]

My dear George,—

I have at last done my Holland: you won't be surprised to hear that I did it in two days, and was too glad to rush home on the first pretence, after (as usual) seeing nothing I cared the least about. The Country itself I had seen long before in Dutch Pictures, and between Beccles and Norwich: the Towns I had seen in Picturesque Annuals, Drop Scenes &c.

But the Pictures—the Pictures—themselves?

Well, you know how I am sure to mismanage: but you will hardly believe, even of me, that I never saw what was most worth seeing, the Hague Gallery! But so it was: had I been by myself, I should have gone off directly (after landing at Rotterdam) to that: but Mr. Manby was with me: and he thought best to see about Rotterdam first: which was last Thursday, at whose earliest Dawn we arrived. So we tore about in an open Cab: saw nothing: the Gallery not worth a visit: and at night I was half dead with weariness. Then again on Friday I, by myself, should have started for the Hague: but as Amsterdam was also to be done, we thought best to go there (as furthest) first. So we went: tore about the town in a Cab as before: and I raced through the Museum seeing (I must say) little better than what I have seen over and over again in England. I couldn't admire the Night-watch much: Van der Helst's very good picture seemed to me to have been cleaned: I thought the Rembrandt Burgomasters worth all the rest put together. But I certainly looked very flimsily at all.

Well, all this done, away we went to the Hague: arriving there just as the Museum closed for that day; next Day (Saturday) it was not to be open at all (I having proposed to wait in case it should), and on Sunday only from 12 to 2. Hearing all this, in Rage and Despair I tore back to Rotterdam: and on Saturday Morning got the Boat out of the muddy Canal in which she lay and tore back down the Maas &c. so as to reach

dear old Bawdsey shortly after Sunday's Sunrise. Oh my delight when I heard them call out "Orford Lights!" as the Boat was plunging over the Swell.

All this is very stupid, really wrong: but you are not surprised at it in me. One reason however of my Disgust was, that we (in our Boat) were shut up (as I said) in the Canal, where I couldn't breathe. I begged Mr. Manby to let me take him to an Inn: he would stick to his Ship, he said: and I didn't like to leave him. Then it was Murray who misled me about the Hague Gallery: he knew nothing about its being shut on Saturdays. Then again we neither of us knew a word of Dutch: and I was surprised how little was known of English in return.

But I shall say no more. I think it is the last foreign Travel I shall ever undertake; unless I should go with you to see the Dresden Madonna: to which there is one less impediment now Holland is not to be gone through. . . . I am the Colour of a Lobster with Sea-faring: and my eyes smart: so Good-bye. Let me hear of you. Ever yours, E. F. G.

Oh dear!—Rembrandt's Dissection—where and how did I miss that?

[Æt. 54]

To Samuel Laurence

[death of thackeray]

Market Hill: Woodbridge,
Jan. 7, '64.

Dear Laurence,—

. . . I want to know about your two Portraits of Thackeray: the first one (which I think Smith and Elder have) I know by the print: I want to know about one you last did (some two years ago?) whether you think it as good and characteristic: and also who has it. Frederic Tennyson sent me a photograph of W. M. T. old, white, massive, and melancholy, sitting in his Library.

I am surprized almost to find how much I am thinking of him: so little as I had seen him for the last ten years; not once for the last five. I had been told—by you, for one—that he was spoiled. I am glad therefore that I

have scarce seen him since he was "old Thackeray." I keep reading his Newcomes of nights, and as it were hear him saying so much in it; and it seems to me as if he might be coming up my Stairs, and about to come (singing) into my Room, as in old Charlotte Street &c. thirty years ago.

[Æt. 66]

To C. E. Norton

["SCOLDING ALL THE WORLD"; AMERICAN WRITERS]

Little Grange, Woodbridge,
Jan. 23, '76.

My dear Sir,—

I suppose you may see one of the Carlyle Medallions: and you can judge better of the likeness than I, who have not been to Chelsea, and hardly out of Suffolk, these fifteen years and more. I dare say it is like him: but his Profile is not his best phase. In two notes dictated by him since that Business he has not adverted to it: I think he must be a little ashamed of it, though it would not do to say so in return, I suppose. And yet I think he might have declined the Honours of a Life of "Heroism." I have no doubt he would have played a Brave Man's Part if called on; but, meanwhile, he has only sat pretty comfortably at Chelsea, scolding all the world for not being Heroic, and not always very precise in telling them how. He has, however, been so far heroic, as to be always independent, whether of Wealth, Rank, and Coteries of all sorts: nay, apt to fly in the face of some who courted him. I suppose he is changed, or subdued, at eighty; but up to the last ten years he seemed to me just the same as when I first knew him five and thirty years ago. What a Fortune he might have made by showing himself about as a Lecturer, as Thackeray and Dickens did; I don't mean they did it for Vanity: but to make money: and that to spend generously. Carlyle did indeed lecture near forty years ago before he was a Lion to be shown, and when he had but few Readers. I heard his "Heroes" which now seems to me one of his best Books. He looked very handsome

then, with his black hair, fine Eyes, and a sort of crucified Expression.

I know of course (in Books) several of those you name in your Letter: Longfellow, whom I may say I love, and so (I see) can't call him *Mister:* and Emerson whom I admire, for I don't feel that I know the Philosopher so well as the Poet: and Mr. Lowell's "Among my Books" is among mine. I have always much liked, I think rather loved, O. W. Holmes. I scarce know why I could never take to that man of true Genius, Hawthorne. There is a little of my Confession of Faith about your Countrymen, and I should say mine, if I were not more Irish than English.

[Æt. 66]

To C. E. Norton

[A SUGGESTION FOR LOWELL; "DADDY WORDSWORTH"]

[Woodbridge, Feb. 7, '76.]

My dear Sir,—

I will not look on the Book you have sent me as any Return for the Booklet I sent you, but as a free and kindly Gift. I really don't know that you could have sent me a better. I have read it with more continuous attention and gratification than I now usually feel, and always (as Lamb suggested) well disposed to say Grace after reading.

Seeing what Mr. Lowell has done for Dante, Rousseau, &c., one does not wish him to be limited in his Subjects: but I do wish he would do for English Writers what Ste. Beuve has done for French. Mr. Lowell so far goes along with him as to give so much of each Writer's Life as may illustrate his Writings; he has more humour (in which alone I fancy S. B. somewhat wanting), more extensive reading, I suppose; and a power of metaphorical Illustration which (if I may say so) seems to me to want only a little reserve in its use: as was the case perhaps with Hazlitt. But Mr. Lowell is not biassed by Hazlitt's—(by anybody's, so far as I see)—party or personal prejudices; and altogether seems to me the man most fitted to do this Good Work, where it has not (as

with Carlyle's Johnson) been done, for good and all, before. Of course, one only wants the Great Men, in their kind: Chaucer, Pope (Dryden being done), and perhaps some of the "minora sidera" clustered together, as Hazlitt has done them. Perhaps all this will come forth in some future Series even now gathering in Mr. Lowell's Head. However that may be, this present Series will make me return to some whom I have not lately looked up. Dante's face I have not seen these ten years: only his Back on my Book Shelf. What Mr. Lowell says of him recalled to me what Tennyson said to me some thirty-five or forty years ago. We were stopping before a shop in Regent Street where were two Figures of Dante and Goethe. I (I suppose) said, "What is there in old Dante's Face that is missing in Goethe's?" And Tennyson (whose Profile then had certainly a remarkable likeness to Dante's) said: "The Divine." Then Milton; I don't think I've read him these forty years; the whole Scheme of the Poem, and certain Parts of it, looming as grand as anything in my Memory; but I never could read ten lines together without stumbling at some Pedantry that tipped me at once out of Paradise, or even Hell, into the Schoolroom, worse than either. Tennyson again used to say that the two grandest of all Similes were those of the Ships hanging in the Air, and "the Gunpowder one," which he used slowly and grimly to enact, in the Days that are no more. He certainly then thought Milton the sublimest of all the Gang; his Diction modelled on Virgil, as perhaps Dante's.

Spenser I never could get on with, and (spite of Mr. Lowell's good word) shall still content myself with such delightful Quotations from him as one lights upon here and there: the last from Mr. Lowell.

Then, old "Daddy Wordsworth," as he was sometimes called, I am afraid, from my Christening, he is now, I suppose, passing under the Eclipse consequent on the Glory which followed his obscure Rise. I remember fifty years ago at our Cambridge, when the Battle was fighting for him by the Few against the Many of us who only laughed at "Louisa in the Shade" &c. His Brother was then Master of Trinity College; like all Wordsworths

(unless the drowned Sailor) pompous and priggish. He used to drawl out the Chapel responses so that we called him the "Mēēserable Sinner" and his brother the "Mēēserable Poet." Poor fun enough: but I never can forgive the Lakers all who first despised and then patronized "Walter Scott," as they loftily called him: and He, dear, noble, Fellow, thought they were quite justified. Well, your Emerson has done him far more Justice than his own Countryman Carlyle, who won't allow him to be a Hero in any way, but sets up such a cantankerous narrow-minded Bigot as John Knox in his stead. I did go to worship at Abbotsford, as to Stratford on Avon: and saw that it was good to have so done. If you, if Mr. Lowell, have not lately read it, pray read Lockhart's account of his Journey to Douglas Dale on (I think) July 18 or 19, 1831. It is a piece of Tragedy, even to the muttering Thunder, like the Lammermuir, which does not look very small beside Peter Bell and Co.

My dear Sir, this is a desperate Letter; and that last Sentence will lead to another dirty little Story about my Daddy: to which you must listen or I should feel like the Fine Lady in one of Vanburgh's Plays, "Oh my God, that you won't listen to a Woman of Quality when her Heart is bursting with Malice!" And perhaps you on the other Side of the Great Water may be amused with a little of your old Granny's Gossip.

Well then: about 1826, or 7, Professor Airy (now our Astronomer Royal) and his brother William called on The Daddy at Rydal. In the course of Conversation Daddy mentioned that sometimes when genteel Parties came to visit him, he contrived to slip out of the room, and down the garden walk to where "The Party's" travelling Carriage stood. This Carriage he would look into to see what Books they carried with them: and he observed it was generally "Walter Scott's." It was Airy's Brother (a very veracious man, and an Admirer of Wordsworth, but, to be sure, more of Sir Walter) who told me this. It is this conceit that diminishes Wordsworth's stature among us, in spite of the mountain Mists he lived among. Also, a little stinginess; not like Sir Walter in that! I remember Hartley Coleridge telling us at Ambleside how Professor Wilson and some one

else (H. C. himself perhaps) stole a Leg of Mutton from Wordsworth's Larder for the fun of the Thing.

Here then is a long Letter of old world Gossip from the old Home. I hope it won't tire you out: it need not, you know.

P.S.—By way of something better from the old World, I post you Hazlitt's own Copy of his English Poets, with a few of his marks for another Edition in it. If you like to keep it, pray do: if you like better to give it to Hazlitt's successor, Mr. Lowell, do that from yourself.

[Æt. 68]

To J. R. Lowell

[KEATS AND CATULLUS; SCOTT'S NOVELS]

Little Grange, Woodbridge,

February 28, '78.

My dear Sir,—

I ventured to send you Keats' Love Letters to Miss —— *Brawne!* a name in which there is much, as you say of his, and other names. . . . Well, I thought you might—must—wish to see these Letters, and, may be, not get them so readily in Spain. So I made bold. The Letters, I doubt not, are genuine: whether rightly or wrongly published I can't say: only I, for one, am glad of them. I had just been hammering out some notes on Catullus, by our Cambridge Munro, Editor of Lucretius, which you ought to have; English Notes to both, and the Prose Version of Lucretius quite readable by itself. Well, when Keats came, I scarce felt a change from Catullus: both such fiery Souls as wore out their Bodies early; and I can even imagine Keats writing such filthy Libels against anyone he had a spite against, even Armitage Brown, had Keats lived two thousand years ago. . . .

I had a kind letter lately from Mr. Norton: and have just posted him some Carlyle letters about that Squire business. If you return to America before very long you will find them there. How long is your official Stay in Spain? Limited, or Unlimited? By the by of Carlyle, I heard from his Niece some weeks ago that he had been

poorly: but, when she wrote, himself again: only taking his daily walk in a Carriage, and sitting up till past Midnight with his Books, in spite of Warnings to Bed. As old Voltaire said to his Niece on like occasion, "Qu'est ce que cela fait si je m'amuse?" I have from Mudie a sensible dull Book of Letters from a Miss Wynn: with this one good thing in it. She has been to visit Carlyle in 1845; he has just been to visit Bishop Thirlwall in Wales, and duly attended Morning Chapel, as a Bishop's Guest should. "It was very well done; it was like so many Souls pouring in through all the Doors to offer their orisons to God who sent them on Earth. We were no longer Men, and had nothing to do with Men's usages; and, after it was all over, all those Souls seemed to disperse again silent into Space. And not till we all met afterward in the common Room, came the Human Greetings and Civilities." This is, I think, a little piece worth sending to Madrid; I am sure, the best I have to offer.

I have had read to me of nights some of Sir Walter's Scotch Novels; Waverley, Rob, Midlothian, now the Antiquary: eking them out as charily as I may. For I feel, in parting with each, as parting with an old Friend whom I may never see again. Plenty of dull, and even some bad, I know: but parts so admirable, and the Whole so delightful. It is wonderful how he sows the seed of his Story from the very beginning, and in what seems barren ground: but all comes up in due course, and there is the whole beautiful Story at last. I think all this Fore-cast is to be read in Scott's shrewd, humorous, Face: as one sees it in Chantrey's Bust; and as he seems meditating on his Edinburgh Monument. I feel a wish to see that, and Abbotsford again: taking a look at Dunbar by the way: but I suppose I shall get no further than Dunwich.

Some one (not you) sent me your Moosehead Journal: but I told Mr. Norton I should tell you, if I wrote, that I did not like the Style of it at all; all "too clever by half." Do you not say so yourself after Cervantes, Scott, Montaigne, &c.? I don't know I ought to say all this to you: but you can well afford to be told it by one of far more authority than yours most sincerely

E. FitzGerald.

[Æt. 69]

To C. E. Norton

[keats's "letters"; "restoring" churches]

Woodbridge, April 4, 1878.

My dear Norton,—

I wish you would not impose on yourself to write me a letter; which you say is "in your head." You have Literary work, and a Family to enjoy with you what spare time your Professional Studies leave you. Whereas I have nothing of any sort that I am engaged to do: all alone for months together: taking up such Books as I please: and rather liking to write Letters to my Friends, whom I now only communicate with by such means. And very few of my oldest Friends, here in England, care to answer me, though I know from no want of Regard: but I know that few sensible men, who have their own occupations, care to write Letters unless on some special purpose; and I now rarely get more than one yearly Letter from each. Seeing which, indeed, I now rarely trouble them for more. So pray be at ease in this respect: you have written to me, as I to you, more than has passed between myself and my fifty years old Friends for some years past. I have had two notes from you quite lately: one to tell me that Squire reached you; and another that he was on his way back here. I was in no hurry for him, knowing that, if he got safe into your hands, he would continue there as safe as in my own. I also had your two Copies of Olympia: one of which I sent to Cowell, who is also always too busy to write to me, except about twice a year, in his Holydays.

I am quite content to take History as you do, that is, as the Squire-Carlyle presents it to us; not looking the Gift Horse in the Mouth. Also, I am sure you are quite right about the Keats' Letters. I hope I should have revolted from the Book had anything in it detracted from the man: but all seemed to me in his favour, and therefore I did not feel I did wrong in having the secret of that heart opened to me. I hope Mr. Lowell will not resent my thinking he might so far sympathize with me. In fact, could he, could you, resist taking up,

and reading, the Letters, however doubtful their publication might have seemed to your Conscience?

Now I enclose you a little work of mine which I hope does no irreverence to the Man it talks of. It is meant quite otherwise. I often got puzzled, in reading Lamb's Letters, about some Data in his Life to which the Letters referred: so I drew up the enclosed for my own behoof, and then thought that others might be glad of it also. If I set down his Miseries, and the one Failing for which those Miseries are such a Justification, I only set down what has been long and publickly known, and what, except in a Noodle's eyes, must enhance the dear Fellow's character, instead of lessening it. "Saint Charles!" said Thackeray to me thirty years ago, putting one of C. L.'s letters to his forehead; and old Wordsworth said of him: "If there be a Good Man, Charles Lamb is one."

I have been interested in the Memoir and Letters of C. Sumner: a thoroughly sincere, able, and (I should think) affectionate man to a few; without humour, I suppose, or much artistic Feeling. You might like to look over a slight, and probably partial, Memoir of A. de Musset, by his Brother, who (whether well or ill) leaves out the Absinthe, which is generally supposed to have shortened the Life of that man of Genius. Think of Clarissa being one of his favorite Books; he could not endure the modern Parisian Romance. It reminded me of our Tennyson (who has some likeness, "mutatis mutandis" of French Morals, Absinthe, &c., to the Frenchman)—of his once saying to me of Clarissa, "I love those large, still, Books."

I parted from Doudan with regret; that is, from two volumes of him; all I had: but I think I see four quoted. That is pretty, his writing to his Brother, who is dwelling (1870-1) in some fortified Town, on whose ramparts, now mounted with cannon, "I used to gather Violets." And I cannot forget what he says to a Friend at that crisis, "Engage in some long course of Study to drown Trouble in": and he quotes Ste. Beuve saying, one long Summer Day in the Country, "Lisons tout Madame de Sévigné." You may have to advise me to some such

course before long. I will avoid speaking, or, so far as I can, thinking, of what I cannot prevent, or alter.

You say you like my Letters: which I say is liking what comes from this old Country, more yours than mine. I have heard that some of your People would even secure a Brick, or Stone, from some old Church here to imbed in some new Church a-building over the Atlantic. Plenty of such materials might be had, for this foolish People are restoring, and rebuilding, old Village Churches that have grown together in their Fields for Centuries. Only yesterday I wrote to decline helping such a work on a poor little Church I remember these sixty years. Well, you like my Letters; I think there is too much of this one; but I will end, as I believe I began, in praying you not to be at any trouble in answering it, or any other, from

Yours sincerely,
E. F. G.

Pray read the Scene at Mrs. McCandlish's Inn when Colonel Mannering returns from India to Ellangowan. It is Shakespeare.

Woodbridge, April 16, 1878.

Only a word; to say that yesterday came Squire-Carlyle from you: and a kind long letter from Mr. Lowell: and—and the first Nightingale, who sang in my Garden the same song as in Shakespeare's days: and, before the Day had closed, Dandie Dinmont came into my room on his visit to young Bertram in Portanferry Gaol-house.

[Æt. 72]

To W. F. Pollock
[James Spedding]

[1881.]

My dear Pollock,—

Thank you for your kind Letter; which I forwarded, with its enclosure to Thompson, as you desired.

If Spedding's Letters, or parts of them, would not suit the Public, they would surely be a very welcome treasure

to his Friends. Two or three pages of Biography would be enough to introduce them to those who knew him less long and less intimately than ourselves: and all who read would be the better, and the happier, for reading them.

I am surprised to find how much I dwell upon the thought of him, considering that I had not refreshed my Memory with the sight or sound of him for more than twenty years. But all the past (before that) comes upon me: I cannot help thinking of him while I wake; and when I do wake from Sleep, I have a feeling of something lost, as in a dream, and it is J. S.

I suppose that Carlyle amused himself, after just losing his Wife, with the Records he has left: what he says of her seems a sort of penitential glorification: what of others, just enough in general: but in neither case to be made public, and so immediately after his Decease. . . . I keep wondering what J. S. would have said on the matter: but I cannot ask him now, as I might have done a month ago. . . .

Dear old Jem! His loss makes one's Life more dreary, and "en revanche" the end of it less regretful.

[Æt. 72]

To H. Schütz Wilson

[PERSIAN POETS]

[1 March, 1882.]

My dear Sir,—

I must thank you sincerely for your thoughts about Salámán, in which I recognize a good will toward the Translator, as well as liking for his work.

Of course your praise could not but help that on: but I scarce think that it is of a kind to profit so far by any review as to make it worth the expense of Time and Talent you might bestow upon it. In Omar's case it was different: he sang, in an acceptable way it seems, of what all men feel in their hearts, but had not had exprest in verse before: Jámí tells of what everybody knows, under cover of a not very skilful Allegory. I have undoubtedly improved the whole by boiling it down to about a Quarter of its original size; and there are

many pretty things in it, though the blank Verse is too Miltonic for Oriental style.

All this considered, why did I ever meddle with it? Why, it was the first Persian Poem I read, with my friend Edward Cowell, near on forty years ago: and I was so well pleased with it then (and now think it almost the best of the Persian Poems I have read or heard about), that I published my Version of it in 1856 (I think) with Parker of the Strand. When Parker disappeared, my unsold copies, many more than of the sold, were returned to me; some of which, if not all, I gave to little Quaritch, who, I believe, trumpeted them off to some little profit: and I thought no more of them.

But some six or seven years ago that Sheikh of mine, Edward Cowell, who liked the Version better than any one else, wished it to be reprinted. So I took it in hand, boiled it down to three-fourths of what it originally was, and (as you say) clapt it on the back of Omar, where I still believed it would hang somewhat of a dead weight; but *that* was Quaritch's look-out, not mine. I have never heard of any notice taken of it, but just now from you: and I believe that, say what you would, people would rather have the old Sinner alone. Therefore it is that I write all this to you. I doubt not that any of your Editors would accept an Article from you on the Subject, but I believe also they would much prefer one on many another Subject: and so probably with the Public whom you write for.

Thus "liberavi animam meam" for your behoof, as I am rightly bound to do in return for your Goodwill to me.

As to the publication of my name, I believe I could well dispense with it; were it other and better than it is. But I have some unpleasant associations with it: not the least of them being that it was borne, Christian and Surname, by a man who left College just when I went there. . . . What has become of him I know not: but he, among other causes, has made me dislike my name, and made me sign myself (half in fun, of course,) to my friends, as now I do to you, sincerely yours,

(The Laird of) Littlegrange

where I date from.

[Æt. 74]

To C. E. Norton

[CARLYLE; BALLADS]

Woodbridge, May 12, '83.

My dear Norton,—

Your Emerson-Carlyle of course interested me very much, as I believe a large public also. I had most to learn of Emerson, and that all good: but Carlyle came out in somewhat of a new light to me also. Now we have him in his Jane's letters, as we had seen something of him before in the Reminiscences: but a yet more tragic story; so tragic that I know not if it ought not to have been withheld from the Public: assuredly it seems to me, ought to have been but half of the whole it now is. But I do not the less recognize Carlyle for more admirable than before—if for no other reason than his thus furnishing the world with weapons against himself which the World in general is glad to turn against him. . . .

And, by way of finishing what I have to say on Carlyle for the present, I will tell you that I had to go up to our huge, hideous, London a week ago, on disagreeable business: which Business, however, I got over in time for me to run to Chelsea before I returned home at Evening. I wanted to see the Statue on the Chelsea Embankment which I had not yet seen: and the old No. 5 of Cheyne Row, which I had not seen for five and twenty years. The Statue I thought very good, though looking somewhat small and ill set-off by its dingy surroundings. And No. 5 (now 24), which had cost her so much of her life, one may say, to make habitable for him, now all neglected, unswept, ungarnished, uninhabited

TO LET.

I cannot get it out of my head, the tarnished Scene of the Tragedy (one must call it) there enacted.

Well, I was glad to get away from it, and the London of which it was a small part, and get down here to my

own dull home, and by no means sorry not to be a Genius at such a Cost. "Parlons d'autres choses."

I got our Woodbridge Bookseller to enquire for your Mr. Child's Ballad-book; but could only hear, and indeed be shown a specimen, of a large Quarto Edition, *de luxe* I believe, and would not meddle with that. I do not love any unwieldy Book, even a Dictionary; and I believe that I am contented enough with such Knowledge as I have of the old Ballads in many a handy Edition. Not but I admire Mr. Child for such an undertaking as his; but I think his Book will be more for Great Libraries, Public or Private, than for my scanty Shelves at my age of seventy-five. I have already given away to Friends all that I had of any rarity or value, especially if over octavo.

By the way there was one good observation, I think, in Mrs. Oliphant's superficial, or hasty, History of English 18th Century Literature, viz., that when the Beatties, Blacks, and other recognized Poets of the Day were all writing in a "classical" way, and tried to persuade Burns to do the like, it was certain Old Ladies who wrote so many of the Ballads, which, many of them, have passed as ancient, "Sir Patrick Spence" for one, I think.

Our Spring flowers have been almost all spoilt by Winter weather, and the Trees before my window only just now beginning to

"Stand in a mist of Green,"

as Tennyson sings. Let us hope their Verdure, late arrayed, will last the longer. I continue pretty well, with occasional reminders from Bronchitis, who is my established Brownie.

[Æt. 46] ALFRED LORD TENNYSON

1809–1892

To John Forster

["THE CHARGE OF THE LIGHT BRIGADE"]

[1855]

My dear Forster,

In the first place thanks for your critique, which seems to me good and judicious. Many thanks, my wife will

write to you about it; but what I am writing to you now about is a matter which interests me very much. My friend Chapman of 3, Stone Buildings, Lincoln's Inn, writes to me thus:—"An acquaintance of mine in the department of the S. P. G. as he calls it (Society for the Propagation of the Gospel) was saying how a chaplain in the Crimea sent by the Society writes to the Society—(neither he nor the Society being suspected of any Tennysonian prejudices)—'The *greatest service you can do* just now is to send out on printed slips Mr. A. T.'s "Charge at Balaclava." It is the greatest favourite of the soldiers—half are singing it, and all want to have it in black and white, so as to read what has so taken them.'"

Now, my dear Forster, you see I cannot possibly be deaf to such an appeal. I wish to send out about 1000 slips, and I don't at all want the S. P. G. or any one to send out the *version last printed:* it would, I believe, quite disappoint the soldiers. Don't you live quite close to the S. P. G.? Could you not send Henry over to say that *I* am sending over the soldiers' version of my ballad, and beg them not to stir in the matter? The soldiers are the best critics in what pleases them. I send you a copy which retains the "Light Brigade," and the "blunder'd"; and I declare it is the best of the two, and that the criticism of two or three London friends (not yours) induced me to spoil it. For Heaven's sake get *this* copy fairly printed at once, and sent out. I have sent it by this post likewise to Moxon, but you are closer to your printer. Concoct with him how it is all to be managed: I am so sorry that I am not in town to have done it at once. I have written a little note to the soldiers which need not be sent—just as you like. It might be merely printed "From A. Tennyson." Please see to all this: and see that there are *no mistakes;* and I will be bound to you for evermore, and more than ever yours in great haste,

A. Tennyson.

P.S. I am convinced now after writing it out that this *is* the best version.

[Æt. 50]

To William Makepeace Thackeray
[thanks for appreciation]

Farringford,
[1859]

My dear Thackeray,

Should I not have answered you ere this 6th of November? surely: what excuse? none that I know of: except indeed, that perhaps your very generosity and boundlessness of approval made me in a measure shamefaced. I could scarcely accept it, being, I fancy, a modest man, and always more or less doubtful of my own efforts in any line. But I may tell you that your little note gave me more pleasure than all the journals and monthlies and quarterlies which have come across me: not so much from your being the Great Novelist, I hope, as from your being my good old friend, or perhaps from your being both of these in one. Well, let it be. I have been ransacking all sorts of old albums and scrap books but cannot find anything worthy sending you. Unfortunately before your letter arrived I had agreed to give Macmillan the only available poem I had by me ("Sea Dreams"). I don't think he would have got it (for I dislike publishing in magazines) except that he had come to visit me in my Island, and was sitting and blowing his weed vis-à-vis. I am sorry that you have engaged for any quantity of money to let your brains be sucked periodically by Smith, Elder & Co.: not that I don't like Smith, who seems from the very little I have seen of him, liberal and kindly, but that so great an artist as you are should go to work after this fashion. Whenever you feel your brains as the "remainder biscuit," or indeed whenever you will, come over to me and take a blow on these downs where the air as Keats said is "worth sixpence a pint," and bring your girls too.

Yours always,
A. Tennyson.

[Æt. 52] OLIVER WENDELL HOLMES
1809–1894

To James T. Fields

[an error of one week]

296 Beacon Street, February 11, 1862.

My dear Mr. Fields,—

On Friday evening last I white-cravated myself, took a carriage, and found myself at your door at eight of the clock P.M.

A cautious female responded to my ring, and opened the chained portal about as far as a clam opens his shell to see what is going on in Cambridge Street, where he is waiting for a customer.

Her first glance impressed her with the conviction that I was a burglar. The mild address with which I accosted her removed that impression, and I rose in the moral scale to the comparatively elevated position of what the unfeeling world calls a "sneak-thief."

By dint, however, of soft words, and that look of ingenuous simplicity by which I am so well known to you and all my friends, I coaxed her into the belief that I was nothing worse than a rejected contributor, an autograph collector, an author with a volume of poems to dispose of, or other disagreeable but not dangerous character.

She unfastened the chain, and I stood before her.

> I calmed her fears, and she was calm
> And told

me how you and Mrs. F. had gone to New York, and how she knew nothing of any literary debauch that was to come off under your roof, but would go and call another unprotected female who knew the past, present, and future, and could tell me why this was thus, that I had been lured from my fireside by the *ignis fatuus* of a deceptive invitation.

It was my turn to be afraid, alone in the house with two of the stronger sex; and I retired.

On reaching home, I read my note and found it was Friday the 16th, not the 9th, I was invited for. . . .

Dear Mr. Fields, I shall be very happy to come to your home on Friday evening, the 16th February, at eight o'clock, to meet yourself and Mrs. Fields, and hear Mr. James read his paper on Emerson.

[Æt. 60]

To John Lothrop Motley

[CHARLES FECHTER; A "NEW PRESIDENT"]

Boston, April 3, 1870.

My dear Motley,—

I feel as if I must have something or other to say that will interest you, but what it is, if there is anything, I can hardly guess as yet. *L'appetit vient en mangeant,* I have no doubt, and if I can only tell you that I am alive and have not forgotten you, I shall perhaps feel better for saying it. I have been rather miserable this winter by reason of asthmatic tendencies, which, without preventing me from doing my work, keep me more or less uncomfortable, and tell me to decline my invitations for a while. I have been well enough, however, of late, and went to a dinner-party at Mrs. ——'s yesterday, and a kind of *soirée* she had after it. This good lady (who is a distant relation of Mrs. Leo Hunter) had bagged Mr. Fechter, the player, who has been turning the heads of the Boston women and girls with his Hamlets and Claude Melnottes. A pleasant, intelligent man, —you may have met him or at any rate seen him,—but Boston *furores* are funny. The place is just of the right size for æsthetic endemics, and they spare neither age nor sex—among the women, that is, for we have man-women and woman-women here, you know. It reminds me of the time we had when Jefferson was here, but Fechter is fêted off the stage as much as he is applauded on it. I have only seen him in Hamlet, in which he interested rather than overwhelmed me. But his talk about Rachel and the rest with whom he has played so much was mighty pleasant.

Another sensation in a somewhat different sphere is our new Harvard College President. King Log has made room for King Stork. Mr. Eliot makes the Corporation

meet *twice* a month instead of once. He comes to the meeting of every Faculty, ours among the rest, and keeps us up to eleven and twelve o'clock at night discussing new arrangements. He shows an extraordinary knowledge of all that relates to every department of the University, and presides with an *aplomb,* a quiet, imperturbable, serious good-humor, that it is impossible not to admire. We are, some of us, disposed to think that he is a little too much in a hurry with some of his innovations, and take care to let the Corporation know it. I saw three of them the other day and found that they were on their guard, as they all quoted that valuable precept, *festina lente,* as applicable in the premises. I cannot help being amused at some of the scenes we have in our Medical Faculty,—this cool, grave young man proposing in the calmest way to turn everything topsy-turvy, taking the reins into his hands and driving as if he were the first man that ever sat on the box. I say amused, because I do not really care much about most of the changes he proposes, and I look on a little as I would at a rather serious comedy.

"How is it? I should like to ask," said one of our number the other evening, "that this Faculty has gone on for eighty years, managing its own affairs and doing it well,—for the Medical School is the most flourishing department connected with the college,—how is it that we have been going on so well in the same orderly path for eighty years, and now within *three or four months* it is proposed to change all our modes of carrying on the school—it seems very extraordinary, and I should like to know how it happens."

"I can answer Dr. ——'s question very easily," said the bland, grave young man: "there is a new President."

The tranquil assurance of this answer had an effect such as I hardly ever knew produced by the most eloquent sentences I ever heard uttered. Eliot has a deep, almost melancholy sounding voice—with a little of that character that people's voices have when there is somebody lying dead in the house, but a placid smile on his face that looks as if it might mean a deal of determination, perhaps of obstinacy. I have great hopes from his energy and devotion to his business, which he studies

as I suppose no President ever did before; but I think the Corporation and Overseers will have to hold him in a little, or he will want to do too many things at once.

I went to the Club last Saturday, and met some of the friends you always like to hear of. I sat by the side of Emerson, who always charms me with his delicious voice, his fine sense and wit, and the delicate way he steps about among the words of his vocabulary,—if you have seen a cat picking her footsteps in wet weather, you have seen the picture of Emerson's exquisite intelligence, feeling for its phrase or epithet,—sometimes I think of an ant-eater singling out his insects, as I see him looking about and at last seizing his noun or adjective,—the best, the only one which would serve the need of his thought.

Longfellow was there,—not in good spirits I thought by his looks. On talking with him I found it was so. He feels the tameness and want of interest of the life he is leading after the excitement of his European experience, and makes no secret of it. I think the work of translating Dante kept him easy, and that he is restless now for want of a task. . . . I hope he will find some pleasant literary labor for his later years,—for his graceful and lovely nature can hardly find expression in any form without giving pleasure to others, and for him to be idle is, I fear, to be the prey of sad memories.

Lowell was not at the Club. I saw him at the February one seeming well and in good spirits.

Agassiz, you know, has been in a condition to cause very grave fears. I am happy to say that he is much improved of late. . . .

I have left no room to talk of your affairs, to sympathize with your spoliation,—to say how grand we all felt when we read of your famous reception of the great folks the other day, nor to tell you how we miss you and your family here in your own little city, which you must not forget because it looks so small in the distance. You like a letter from me every few months, I am sure, though there is not a great deal in it. You know you need not answer.

[Æt. 66]

To James Russell Lowell

["elders" with pith]

296 Beacon Street, September 28, 1875.

My dear James,—

Two faculty meetings on Thursday of this week (Dental and Medical) which I cannot miss, and my lectures on the following Thursdays, keep me in Boston in despite of all temptations. I never go to any shows nowadays—formerly they were *autre chose*—but if I did go to any, cattle-shows would be my favorite resort—especially in Spain, where I understand they have very fine ones. At our native exhibitions I have a wonderful liking for looking at prize pumpkins and squashes—great fellows marked 100 lb., 120 lb., 127 lb.! and so on—the rivalry excites me like a horse-race. As for fatted calves and the like, I am as eager for them as the prodigal son. The Great Cheese commonly shown comes in for a share of my admiration. The sampler worked by a little girl aged five years and three months, and the patchwork quilt wrought by the old lady of eighty-seven years, four months, and six days, receive alike my respectful attention. I lift the dasher of the new patent churn with the proud feeling that I, too, am a contriver and see my unpatented gimcrack in every window. And the ploughing-match, too—not quite so actively exciting as Epsom (I don't mean the salts, of course, but the race), but still equal to bringing on a mild glow of excitement. Yes, I miss a good deal in not going to the cattle-shows.

But we missed you sadly, my dear fellow, on Saturday. Good and great men are getting scarce, my James, and you must not be trifling in this way with your gouts and gastralgias.

Do thank your son-in-law (I met him the other day and he showed me a photograph of one of his children, which was a credit to all concerned)—for complimenting me with a wish for my presence.

I have been having a very pleasant vacation at Beverly, Nahant, and Mattapoisett, and am beginning my seven months' lecture course feeling quite juvenile for an el-

derly gentleman—however, the *elders* always had a good deal of real pith in them, I remember, in my boyish days! and I suppose it is so now.

[Æt. 37]

WILLIAM MAKEPEACE THACKERAY
1811–1863

To Mrs. Brookfield
["payne"]

[1848.]

My dear Mrs. Brookfield:

Now that it is over and irremediable I am thinking with a sort of horror of a bad joke in the last number of *Vanity Fair,* which may perhaps annoy somebody whom I wouldn't wish to displease. Amelia is represented as having a lady's maid, and the lady's maid's name is Payne. I laughed when I wrote it, and thought that it was good fun, but now, who knows whether you and Payne and everybody won't be angry, and in fine, I am in a great tremor. The only way will be, for you I fear to change Payne's name to her Christian one. Pray don't be angry if you are, and forgive me if I have offended. You know you are only a piece of Amelia, my mother is another half, my poor little wife—*y est pour beaucoup.*

and I am
Yours most sincerely,
W. M. Thackeray.

I hope you will write to say that you forgive me.

[Æt. 37]

To the Same
[at work on "pendennis"]
From the old shop, 21.

[1849]

Is it pouring with rain at Park Lodge, and the most dismal, wretched, cat and dog day ever seen? O! it's gloomy at 13 Young Street! I have been labouring all day—drawing that is, and doing my plates, till my &s

are ready to drop off for weariness. But they must not stop for yet a little while, and until I have said how do you do to my dear lady and the young folks at Southampton. I hardly had time to know I was gone, and that happy fortnight was over, till this morning. At the train, whom do you think I found? Miss G—— who says she is Blanche Amory, and I think she is Blanche Amory; amiable at times, amusing, clever and depraved. We talked and persiflated all the way to London, and the idea of her will help me to a good chapter, in which I will make Pendennis and Blanche play at being in love, such a wicked false humbugging London love, as two *blasé* London people might act, and half deceive themselves that they were in earnest. That will complete the cycle of Mr. Pen's worldly experiences, and then we will make, or try and make, a good man of him. O! me, we are wicked worldlings most of us, may God better us and cleanse us!

I wonder whether ever again, I shall have such a happy peaceful fortnight as that last! How sunshiny the landscape remains in my mind, I hope for always; and the smiles of dear children. . . . I can hardly see as I write for the eye-water, but it isn't with grief, but for the natural pathos of the thing. How happy your dear regard makes me, how it takes off the solitude and eases it; may it continue, pray God, till your head is white as mine, and our children have children of their own. Instead of being unhappy because that delightful holiday is over or all but over, I intend that the thoughts of it should serve to make me only the more cheerful and help me, please God, to do my duty better. All such pleasures ought to brace and strengthen one against work days, and lo, here they are. I hope you will be immensely punctual at breakfast and dinner, and do all your business of life with cheerfulness and briskness, after the example of holy Philip Neri, whom you wot of; that is your duty, Madame, and mine is to "pursue my high calling"; and so I go back to it with a full grateful heart, and say God bless all. If it hadn't been pouring-o'-rain so, I think I should have gone off to His Reverence at Brighton; so I send him my very best regards, and a whole box full of kisses to the children. Farewell.

[Æt. 37]

To the Same

[JULES JANIN; A "MISS FOTHERINGAY"]

[PARIS, Feb., 1849.]

My dear Lady:

I have been to see a great character to-day and another still greater yesterday. To-day was Jules Janin, whose books you never read, nor do I suppose you could very well. He is the critic of the Journal des Débats and has made his weekly feuilleton famous throughout Europe. —He does not know a word of English, but he translated Sterne and I think Clarissa Harlowe. One week, having no theatres to describe in his feuilleton, or no other subject handy, he described his own marriage, which took place in fact that week, and absolutely made a present of his sensations to all the European public. He has the most wonderful verve, humour, oddity, honesty, bonhomie. He was ill with the gout, or recovering perhaps; but bounced about the room, gesticulating, joking, gasconading, quoting Latin, pulling out his books which are very handsome, and tossing about his curling brown hair;—a magnificent jolly intelligent face such as would suit Pan I should think, a flood of humorous, rich, jovial talk. And now I have described this, how are you to have the least idea of him.—I daresay it is not a bit like him. He recommended me to read Diderot; which I have been reading in at his recommendation; and that is a remarkable sentimental cynic, too; in his way of thinking and sudden humours not unlike—not unlike Mr. Bowes of the Chatteris Theatre. I can fancy Harry Pendennis and him seated on the bridge and talking of their mutual mishaps;—no, Arthur Pendennis the boy's name is! I shall be forgetting my own next. But mind you, my similes don't go any further: and I hope you don't go for to fancy that you know anybody like Miss Fotheringay—you don't suppose that I think that you have no heart, do you? But there's many a woman who has none, and about whom men go crazy;—such was the other character I saw yesterday. We had a long talk in which she showed me her interior, and I inspected it

and left it in a state of wonderment which I can't describe. . . .

She is kind, frank, open-handed, not very refined, with a warm outpouring of language; and thinks herself the most feeling creature in the world. The way in which she fascinates some people is quite extraordinary. She affected me by telling me of an old friend of ours in the country—Dr. Portman's daughter indeed, who was a parson in our parts—who died of consumption the other day after leading the purest and saintliest life, and who after she had received the sacrament read over her friend's letter and actually died with it on the bed. Her husband adores her; he is an old cavalry Colonel of sixty, and the poor fellow away now in India, and yearning after her writes her yards and yards of the most tender, submissive, frantic letters; five or six other men are crazy about her. She trotted them all out, one after another before me last night; not humourously, I mean, nor making fun of them; but complacently describing their adoration for her and acquiescing in their opinion of herself. Friends, lover, husband, she coaxes them all; and no more cares for them than worthy Miss Fotheringay did.—Oh! Becky is a trifle to her; and I am sure I might draw her picture and she would never know in the least that it was herself. I suppose I did not fall in love with her myself because we were brought up together; she was a very simple generous creature then.

Tuesday. Friend came in as I was writing last night, perhaps in time to stop my chattering; but I am *encore tout émerveillé de ma cousine*. By all the Gods! I never had the opportunity of inspecting such a naturalness and coquetry; not that I suppose that there are not many such women; but I have only myself known one or two women intimately, and I daresay the novelty would wear off if I knew more. I had the *Revue des 2 mondes* and the *Journal des Débats* to dinner; and what do you think by way of a delicate attention the *chef* served us up? Mock-turtle soup again, and uncommonly good it was too. After dinner I went to a ball at the prefecture of Police; the most splendid apartments I ever saw in my life. Such lights, pillars, marble, hangings, carvings, and gildings. I am sure King Belshazzar could not have

been more magnificently lodged.—There must have been 15 hundred people, of whom I did not know one single soul. I am surprised that the people did not faint in the Saloons, which were like burning fiery furnaces; but there they were dancing and tripping away, ogling and flirting, and I suppose not finding the place a bit inconveniently warm. The women were very queer looking bodies for the most, I thought, but the men dandies every one, fierce and trim with curling little mustachios. I felt dimly that I was 3 inches taller than any body else in the room but I hoped that nobody took notice of me. There was a rush for ices at a footman who brought those refreshments which was perfectly terrific.—They were scattered melting over the heads of the crowd as I ran out of it in a panic. There was an old British dowager with two daughters seated up against a wall very dowdy and sad, poor old lady; I wonder what she wanted there and whether that was what she called pleasure. I went to see William's old friend and mine, Bowes; he has forty thousand a year and palaces in the country, and here he is a manager of a Theatre of Variétés, and his talk was about actors and coulisses all the time of our interview. I wish it could be the last, but he has made me promise to dine with him, and go I must, to be killed by his melancholy gentlemanlikeness. I think that is all I did yesterday. Dear Lady, I am pained at your having been unwell; I thought you must have been, when Saturday came without any letter. There wont be one today I bet twopence. I am going to a lecture at the Institute; a lecture on Burns by M. Chasles, who is professor of English literature. What a course of lionizing, isn't it? But it must stop; for is not the month the shortest of months? I went to see my old haunts when I came to Paris 13 years ago, and made believe to be a painter,—just after I was ruined and before I fell in love and took to marriage and writing. It was a very jolly time, I was as poor as Job and sketched away most abominably, but pretty contented; and we used to meet in each others little rooms and talk about art and smoke pipes and drink bad brandy and water.—That awful habit still remains, but where is art, that dear mistress whom I loved, though in a very indolent capricious man-

ner, but with a real sincerity?—I see her far, very far off. I jilted her, I know it very well; but you see it was Fate ordained *that* marriage should never take place; and forced me to take on with another lady, two other ladies, three other ladies; I mean the muse and my wife &c. &c.

Well you are very good to listen to all this egotistic prattle, chère sœur, si douce et si bonne. I have no reason to be ashamed of my loves, seeing that all three are quite lawful. Did you go to see my people yesterday? Some day when his reverence is away, will you have the children? and not, if you please, be so vain as to fancy that you can't amuse them or that they will be bored in your house. They must and shall be fond of you, if you please. Alfred's open mouth as he looked at the broken bottle and spilt wine must have been a grand picture of agony.

I couldn't find the lecture room at the Institute, so I went to the Louvre instead and took a feast with the statues and pictures. The Venus of Milo is the grandest figure of figures. The wave of the lines of the figure, whenever seen, fills my senses with pleasure. What is it which so charms, satisfies one, in certain lines? O! the man who achieved that statue was a beautiful genius. I have been sitting thinking of it these 10 minutes in a delightful sensuous rumination. The Colours of the Titian pictures comfort one's eyes similarly; and after these feasts, which wouldn't please my lady very much I daresay, being I should think too earthly for you, I went and looked at a picture I usedn't to care much for in old days, an angel saluting a Virgin and child by Pietro Cortona,—a sweet smiling angel with a lily in her hands, looking so tender and gentle I wished that instant to make a copy of it, and do it beautifully, which I can't, and present it to somebody on Lady-day.—There now, just fancy it is done, and presented in a neat compliment, and hung up in your room—a pretty piece—dainty and devotional?—I drove about with ——, and wondered at her more and more.—She is come to "my dearest William" now: though she doesn't care a fig for me.—She told me astonishing things, showed me a letter in which every word was true and which was a fib from be-

ginning to end;—A miracle of deception;—flattered, fondled, coaxed—O! she was worth coming to Paris for! . . . Pray God to keep us simple. I have never looked at anything in my life which has so amazed me. Why, this is as good, almost, as if I had you to talk to. Let us go out and have another walk.

[Æt. 38]

To the Same
["big higgins"]

[1849.]

. . . I am going to dine at the Berrys' to-day and to Lady Ashburton's at night. I dined at home three days running, think of that. This is my news, it isn't much is it? I have written a wicked number of *Pendennis,* but like it rather; it has a good moral, I believe, although to some it may appear naughty. Big Higgins, who dined with me yesterday, offered me, what do you think? "If," says he, "you are tired and want to lie fallow for a year, come to me for the money. I have much more than I want." Wasn't it kind? I like to hear and to tell of kind things. . . .

To the Same
["those inimitable dickens touches"]

Wednesday, 1849.

What have I been doing since these many days? I hardly know. I have written such a stupid number of *Pendennis* in consequence of not seeing you, that I shall be ruined if you are to stay away much longer. . . . Has William written to you about our trip to Hampstead on Sunday? It was very pleasant. We went first to St. Mark's church, where I always thought you went, but where the pew-opener had never heard of such a person as Mrs. J. O. B.; and having heard a jolly and perfectly stupid sermon, walked over Primrose Hill to the Crowes', where His Reverence gave Mrs. Crowe half an hour's private talk, whilst I was talking under the blossoming apple tree about newspapers to Monsieur Crowe. Well, Mrs. Crowe was delighted with William and his

manner of *discoorsing* her; and indeed, though I say it that shouldn't, from what he said afterwards, and from what we have often talked over pipes in private, that is a pious and kind soul. I mean his, and calculated to soothe and comfort and appreciate and elevate so to speak out of despair, many a soul that your more tremendous, rigorous divines would leave on the wayside, where sin, that robber, had left them half killed. I will have a Samaritan parson when I fall among thieves. You, dear lady, may send for an ascetic if you like; what is he to find wrong in you?

I have talked to my mother about her going to Paris with the children; she is very much pleased at the notion, and it won't be very lonely to me. I shall be alone for some months at any rate, and vow and swear I'll save money. . . . Have you read Dickens? O! it is charming! brave Dickens! It has some of his very prettiest touches — those inimitable Dickens touches which make such a great man of him; and the reading of the book has done another author a great deal of good. In the first place it pleases the other author to see that Dickens, who has long left off alluding to the A.'s works, has been copying the O. A., and greatly simplifying his style, and overcoming the use of fine words. By this the public will be the gainer and *David Copperfield* will be improved by taking a lesson from *Vanity Fair*. Secondly it has put me upon my metal; for ah! Madame, all the metal was out of me and I have been dreadfully and curiously cast down this month past. I say, secondly, it has put me on my metal and made me feel I must do something; that I have fame and name and family to support. . . .

I have just come away from a dismal sight; Gore House full of snobs looking at the furniture. Foul Jews; odious bombazine women, who drove up in mysterious flys which they had hired, the wretches, to be fined, so as to come in state to a fashionable lounge; brutes keeping their hats on in the kind old drawing room,—I longed to knock some of them off, and say "Sir, be civil in a lady's room." . . . There was one of the servants there, not a powdered one, but a butler, a *whatdyoucallit*. My heart melted towards him and I gave him a pound. Ah!

it was a strange, sad picture of *Vanity Fair*. My mind is all boiling up with it; indeed, it is in a queer state. . . . I give my best remembrances to all at Clevedon Court.

[Æt. 38]

To the Same

[mr. h., the widower]

[4th Sept., 1849]
Tuesday, Paris.

Perhaps by my intolerable meanness and blundering, you will not get any letter from me till to-morrow. On Sunday, the man who was to take the letter failed me; yesterday I went with it in a cab to the Grande Poste, which is a mile off, and where you have to go to pay. The cab horse was lame, and we arrived two minutes too late; I put the letter into the unpaid-letter box; I dismissed the poor old broken cab horse, behind which it was agonizing to sit; in fine it was a failure.

When I got to dinner at my aunt's, I found it all was over. Mrs. H. died on Sunday night in her sleep, quite without pain, or any knowledge of the transition. I went and sat with her husband, an old fellow of seventy-two, and found him bearing his calamity in a very honest manly way. What do you think the old gentlemen was doing? Well, he was drinking gin and water, and I had some too, telling his valet to make me some. Man thought this was a master-stroke of diplomacy and evidently thinks I have arrived to take possession as heir, but I know nothing about money matters as yet, and think that the old gentleman at least will have the enjoyment of my aunt's property during life. He told me some family secrets, in which persons of repute figure not honorably. Ah! they shock one to think of. Pray, have you ever committed any roguery in money matters? Has William? Have I? I am more likely to do it than he, that honest man, not having his resolution or self-denial. But I've not as yet, beyond the roguery of not saving perhaps, which is knavish too. I am very glad I came to see my dearest old aunt. She is such a kind tender

creature, laws bless us, how fond she would be of you. I was going to begin about William and say, "do you remember a friend of mine who came to dine at the Thermes, and sang the song about the Mogul, and the blue-bottle fly," but modesty forbade and I was dumb.

Since this was written in the afternoon I suppose if there has been one virtuous man in Paris it is madame's most *obajient* servant. I went to sit with Mr. H. and found him taking what he calls his tiffin in great comfort (tiffin is the meal which I have sometimes had the honor of sharing with you at one o'clock) and this transacted,—and I didn't have any tiffin, having consumed a good breakfast two hours previously—I went up a hundred stairs at least, to Miss B. H.'s airy apartment, and found her and her sister, and sat for an hour. She asked after you so warmly that I was quite pleased; she said she had the highest respect for you, and I was glad to find somebody who knew you; and all I can say is, if you fancy I like being here better than in London, you are in a pleasing error.

Then I went to see a friend of my mother's, then to have a very good dinner at the Café de Paris, where I had *potage à la pourpart,* think of *pourpart* soup. We had it merely for the sake of the name, and it was uncommonly good. Then back to old H. again, to bawl into his ears for an hour and a half; then to drink tea with my aunt—why, life has been a series of sacrifices today, and I must be written up in the book of good works. For I should have liked to go to the play, and follow my own devices best, but for that stern sentiment of duty, which fitfully comes over the most abandoned of men, at times. All the time I was with Mr. H. in the morning, what do you think they were doing in the next room? It was like a novel. They were rapping at a coffin in the bedroom, but he was too deaf to hear, and seems too old to care very much. Ah! dear lady, I hope you are sleeping happily at this hour, and you, and Mr. Williams, and another party who is nameless, shall have all the benefits of an old sinner's prayers.

I suppose I was too virtuous on Tuesday, for yesterday I got back to my old selfish ways again, and did what I liked from morning till night. This self indulgence

though entire was not criminal, at first at least, but I shall come to the painful part of my memoirs presently. All the forenoon I read with intense delight, a novel called *Le Vicomte de Bragelonne,* a continuation of the famous *Mousquetaires* and just as interesting, keeping one panting from volume to volume, and longing for more. This done, and after a walk and some visits, read more novels, *David Copperfield* to wit, in which there is a charming bit of insanity, and which I begin to believe is the very best thing the author has yet done. Then to the Variétés Theatre, to see the play *Chaméléon,* after which all Paris is running, a general satire upon the last 60 years. Everything is satirised, Louis XVI, the Convention, the Empire, the Restoration etc., the barricades, at which these people were murdering each other only yesterday—it's awful, immodest, surpasses my cynicism altogether. At the end of the piece they pretend to bring in the author, and a little child who can just speak, comes in and sings a satiric song, in a feeble, tender, infantine pipe, which seemed to me as impious as the whole of the rest of the piece. They don't care for anything, not religion, not bravery, not liberty, not great men, not modesty. Ah! madame, what a great moralist somebody is, and what *moighty foine* principles *entoirely* he has!

But now, with a blush upon my damask cheek, I come to the adventures of the day. You must know I went to the play with an old comrade, Roger de Beauvoir, an exdandy and man of letters, who talked incessantly during the whole of dinner time, as I remember, though I can't for the life of me recall what he said. Well, we went together to the play, and he took me where William would long to go, to the green-room. I have never been in a French green-room before, and was not much excited, but when he proposed to take me up to the *loge* of a beautiful actress with sparkling eyes and the prettiest little *retroussé* nosey-posey in the world, I said to the *régisseur* of the theatre "lead on!" and we went through passages and up stairs to the *loge,* which is not a box, but O! gracious goodness, a dressing room!——

She had just taken off her rouge, her complexion was only a thousand times more brilliant, perhaps, the *peignoir* of black satin which partially enveloped her perfect

form, only served to heighten &c, which it could but partially do &c. Her lips are really as red as &c, and not covered with paint at all. Her voice is delicious, her eyes, O! they flashed &c upon me, and I felt my &c, beating so that I could hardly speak. I pitched in, if you will permit me the phrase, two or three compliments however, very large and heavy, of the good old English sort, and O! *mon dieu,* she has asked me to go and see her. Shall I go, or shan't I? Shall I go this very day at 4 o'clock, or shall I not? Well, I won't tell you, I will put up my letter before 4, and keep this piece of intelligence for the next packet.

The funeral takes place to-morrow, and as I don't seem to do much work here, I shall be soon probably on the wing, but perhaps I will take a week's touring somewhere about France, Tours and Nantes perhaps or elsewhere, or anywhere, I don't know; but I hope before I go to hear once more from you. I am happy indeed to hear how well you are. What a shame it was to assault my dear lady with my blue devils. Who could help looking to the day of failing powers, but if I last a few years, no doubt I can get a shelter somewhere against that certain adversity, and so I ought not to show you my glum face or my dismal feelings. That's the worst of habit and confidence. You are so kind to me that I like to tell you all, and to think that in good or ill fortune I have your sympathy. Here's an opportunity for sentiment, here's just a little bit of the page left to say something neat and pretty. Je les méprise les jolis mots, vous en ai-je jamais fait de ma vie? Je les laisse à Monsieur Bullar et ses pareils—j'en ferai pour Mademoiselle Page, pour la ravissante la sémillante la frétillante Adèle (c'est ainsi qu'elle se nomme) mais pour vous? Allons—partons—il est quatre heures—fermons la lettre—disons adieu, l'amie et moi—vous m'écrirez avant mon départ n'est ce pas? Allez bien, dormez bien, marchez bien, s'il vous plait, et gardy mwaw ung petty moreso de voter cure.

W. M. T.

[Æt. 38]

To the Same

["I am afraid I disgusted Macaulay"]

[Paris, September 14, 1849.]

My dear Lady:

This letter doesn't count, though it's most probbly the last of the series. Yesterday I couldn't write for I went to Chambourey early in the morning to see those two poor Miss Powers, and the poor old faded and unhappy D'Orsay, and I did not return home till exactly 1 minute before post time, perhaps 2 late for the letter which I flung into the post last night. And so this is the last of the letters and I am coming back immediately. The last anything is unpleasant. . . .

I was to have gone to-morrow for certain to Boulogne, at least, but a party to Fontainebleau was proposed—by whom do you think?—by the President himself; I am going to dine with him to-day, think of that! I believe I write this for the purpose solely of telling you this,—the truth is I have made acquaintance here with Lord Douglas, who is very good natured, and I suppose has been instigating the President to these hospitalities. I am afraid I disgusted Macaulay yesterday at dinner, at Sir George Napier's. We were told that an American lady was coming in the evening, whose great desire in life, was to meet the author of *Vanity Fair,* and the author of the *Lays of* A. Rome, so I proposed to Macaulay to enact me, and to let me take his character. But he said solemnly, that he did not approve of practical jokes, and so this sport did not come to pass. Well, I shall see you at any rate, some day before the 23d., and I hope you will be happy at Southampton enjoying the end of the autumn, and I shall be glad to smoke a pipe with old Mr. Williams too, for I don't care for new acquaintances, whatever some people say, and have only your house now where I am completely at home. I have been idle here, but I have done plenty of dutifulness, haven't I? I must go dress myself, and tell old Dr. Halliday that I am going to dine with the President; that will please him more than even my conversation this evening, and the event will be written over to all the family before long, be sure

of that. Don't you think Mr. Parr will like to know it, and that it will put me well with him? Perhaps I shall find the grand cross of the Legion of Honour under my plate; I will put it on and come to you in it in that case.

I was going to have the impudence to give you a daguerreotype of myself which has been done here, very like and droll it looks, but it seemed to me too impertinent, and I gave it to somebody else. I've bought William four glasses to drink beer out of, since I never can get one of the silver ones when I come; don't let him be alarmed: these only cost a shilling apiece, and two such loves of *eau de Cologne* bottles for Mrs. Procter, and for my dear Mrs. Brookfield I have bought a diamond necklace and earrings,—I have bought you nothing but the handkerchiefs but I hope you will let me give you those, won't you?

I was very sorry for Turpin; I do feel an interest in her, and I think she is very pretty; all this I solemnly vow and protest. My paper is out, here's the last corner of the last letter. I wonder *who* will ask me to dine on Monday next.

[Æt. 39]

To the Same

[LAMARTINE; A CHILD ACTRESS]

[PARIS, 1850.]

My dear Lady:

Do you see how mad everybody is in the world? or is it not my own insanity? Yesterday, when it became time to shut up my letter, I was going to tell you about my elders, who have got hold of a mad old Indian woman, who calls herself Aline Gultave d'origine Mogole, who is stark staring mad, and sees visions, works miracles, *que sais-je?* The old fool is mad of sheer vanity, and yet fool as she is, my people actually believe in her, and I believe the old gentleman goes to her every day. To-day I went to see D'Orsay, who has made a bust of Lamartine, who, too, is mad with vanity. He has written some verses on his bust, and asks, Who is this? Is it a warrior? Is it a hero? Is it a priest? Is it a sage? Is it a

tribune of the people? Is it an Adonis? meaning that he is all these things,—verses so fatuous and crazy I never saw. Well, D'Orsay says they are the finest verses that ever were written, and imparts to me a translation which Miss Power has made of them; and D'Orsay believes in his mad rubbish of a statue, which he didn't make; believes in it in the mad way that madmen do,—that it is divine, and that he made it; only as you look in his eyes, you see that he doesn't quite believe, and when pressed hesitates, and turns away with a howl of rage. D'Orsay has fitted himself up a charming *atelier* with arms and trophies, pictures and looking-glasses, the tomb of Blessington, the sword and star of Napoleon, and a crucifix over his bed; and here he dwells without any doubts or remorses, admiring himself in the most horrible pictures which he has painted, and the statues which he gets done for him. I had been at work till two, all day before going to see him; and thence went to Lady Normanby, who was very pleasant and talkative; and then tramping upon a half dozen of visits of duty. I had refused proffered banquets in order to dine at home, but when I got home at the dinner hour, everybody was away, the *bonne* was ill and obliged to go to the country, and parents and children were away to dine with a Mrs. ——, a good woman who writes books, keeps a select boarding-house for young ladies who wish to see Parisian society, and whom I like, but cannot bear, because she has the organ of admiration too strongly. Papa was king, mamma was queen, in this company, I a sort of foreign emperor with the princesses my daughters. By Jove, it was intolerably painful; and I must go to her soirée to-morrow night too, and drag about in this confounded little Pedlington. Yesterday night,—I am afraid it was the first day of the week,—I dined with Morton, and met no less than four tables of English I knew, and went to the play. There was a little girl acting, who made one's heart ache;—the joke of the piece is, the child, who looks about three, is taken by the servants to a casino, is carried off for an hour by some dragoons, and comes back, having learned to smoke, to dance slang dances, and sing slang songs. Poor little rogue, she sung one of her songs, from an actor's arms; a wicked song, in a sweet little innocent

voice. She will be bought and sold within three years from this time, and won't be playing at wickedness any more. I shall shut up my desk and say God bless all the little girls that you and I love, and their parents. God bless you, dear Lady.

I have got a very amusing book, the Tatler newspaper of 1709; and that shall be my soporific I hope. I have been advancing in Blue Beard, but must give it up; it is too dreadfully cynical and wicked. It is in blank verse and all a diabolical sneer. Depend upon it, Helps is right.

Wednesday. If I didn't write yesterday it was because I was wickedly employed. I was gambling until two o'clock this morning, playing a game called *lansquenet* which is very good gambling; and I left off, as I had begun, very thankful not to carry away any body's money or leave behind any of my own; but it was curious to watch the tempers of the various players, the meanness of one, the flurry and excitement of another, the difference of the same man winning and losing; all which I got, besides a good dinner and a headache this morning. Annie and Minnie and my mother, came to see me yesterday. I don't think they will be so very eager for Paris after three weeks here; the simple habits of our old people will hardly suit the little women. Even in my absence in America, I don't quite like leaving them altogether here; I wonder if an amiable family, as is very kind to me, will give them hospitality for a month? I was writing Blue Beard all day; very sardonic and amusing to do, but I doubt whether it will be pleasant to read or hear, or even whether it is right to go on with this wicked vein; and also, I must tell you that a story is biling up in my interior, in which there shall appear some very good, lofty, and generous people; perhaps a story without any villains in it would be good, wouldn't it?

Thursday.—Thanks for your letter, madame. If I tell you my plans and my small gossip, I don't bore you, do I? You listen to them so kindly at home, that I've got the habit, you see. Why don't you write a little handwriting, and send me yours? This place begins to be as bad as London in the season; there are dinners and

routs for every day and night. Last night I went to dine at home, with *bouilli bœuf* and *ordinaire*, and bad ordinaire too; but the dinner was just as good as a better one, and afterwards I went with my mother to a *soirée*, where I had to face fifty people of whom I didn't know one; and being there, was introduced to other soirée givers, be hanged to them. And there I left my ma, and went off to Madame Gudin's the painter's wife, where really there was a beautiful ball; and all the world, all the English world that is; and to-night it is the President's ball, if you please, and to-morrow, and the next day, and the next, more gaieties. It was queer to see poor old Castlereagh in a dark room, keeping aloof from the dancing and the gaiety, and having his thoughts fixed on kingdom come, and Bennett confessor and martyr; while Lady Castlereagh, who led him into his devotional state, was enjoying the music and the gay company, as cheerfully as the most mundane person present. The French people all talk to me about *Ponche*, when I am introduced to them, which wounds my vanity, which is wholesome very likely. Among the notabilities was Vicomte D'Arlincourt, a mad old romance writer, on whom I amused myself by pouring the most tremendous compliments I could invent. He said, *j'ai vu l'Écosse; mais Valter Scott n'y était plus, hélas!* I said, *vous y étiez, Vicomte, c'était bien assez d'un*—on which the old boy said I possessed French admirably, and knew to speak the prettiest things in the prettiest manner. I wish you could see him, I wish you could see the world here. I wish you and Mr. were coming to the play with me to-night, to a regular melodrama, far away on the Boulevard, and a quiet little snug dinner *au Banquet d'Anacréon*. The *Banquet d'Anacréon* is a dingy little restaurant on the boulevard where all the plays are acted, and they tell great things of a piece called *Paillasse* in which Le Maître performs; *nous verrons*, Madame, *nous verrons*. But with all this racket and gaiety, do you understand that a gentleman feels very lonely? I swear I had sooner have a pipe and a gin and water soirée with somebody, than the best President's *orgeat*. I go to my cousins for half an hour almost every day; you'd like them better than poor Mary whom you won't be able to

stand, at least if she talks to you about her bodily state as she talks to me. What else shall I say in this stupid letter? I've not seen any children as pretty as Magdalene, that's all. I have told Annie to write to you and I am glad Mrs. Fan is going to stay; and I hear that several papers have reproduced the thunder and small beer articles; and I thank you for your letter; and pray the best prayers I am worth for you, and your husband, and child, my dear lady.

W. M. T.

[Æt. 40]

To the Same

[to the zoological gardens; boz]

1851.

I have no news to give for these two days, but I have been busy and done nothing. Virtue doesn't agree with me well, and a very little domestic roseleaf rumpled puts me off my work for the day. Yesterday it was, I forget what; to-day it has been the same reason; and lo! Saturday cometh and nothing is done. . . . We have been to the Zoological Gardens this fine day and amused ourselves in finding likenesses to our friends in many of the animals. Thank *Evns!* both of the girls have plenty of fun and humour; your's ought to have, from both sides of the house,—and a deal of good besides, if she do but possess a mixture of William's disposition and yours. He will be immensely tender over the child when nobody's by, I am sure of that. No father knows for a few months what it is, but they learn afterwards. It strikes me I have made these statements before.

We had a dull dinner at Lady ——'s, a party of ——, chiefly; and O! such a pretty one, blue eyes, gold hair, alabaster shoulders, and such a splendid display of them. Venables was there, very shy and grand looking—how kind that man has always been to me!—and a Mr. Simeon of the Isle of Wight, an Oxford man, who won my heart by praising certain parts of *Vanity Fair* which people won't like. Carlyle glowered in in the evening; and a man who said a good thing. Speaking of a stupid place at the sea-side, Sandwich I think, somebody said, "Can't

you have any fun there?" "O! yes," Corry said, "but you must take it with you." A nice speech I think, not only witty but indicating a gay cheerful heart. I intend to try after that; *we* intend to try after that; and by action and so forth get out of that morbid dissatisfied condition. Now I am going to dress to dine with Lord Holland; my servant comes in to tell me it is time. He is a capital man, an attentive, alert, silent, plate-cleaning, intelligent fellow; I hope we shall go on well together, and that I shall be able to afford him. . . .

Boz is capital this month; some very neat pretty natural writing indeed, better than somebody else's again. By Jove, he is a clever fellow, and somebody else must and shall do better. Quiet, pleasant dinner at Lord Holland's; leg of mutton and that sort of thing; home to bed at 10.30, and to-morrow to work really and truly. Let me hear, please, that you are going on well and I shall go on all the better.

[Æt. 41]

To Edward FitzGerald
["best and oldest friend"]

October 27, 1852.

My dearest old Friend,—

I mustn't go away without shaking your hand, and saying Farewell and God Bless you. If anything happens to me, you by these presents must get ready the Book of Ballads which you like, and which I had not time to prepare before embarking on this voyage. And I should like my daughters to remember that you are the best and oldest friend their Father ever had, and that you would act as such: as my literary executor and so forth. My Books would yield a something as copyrights: and, should anything occur, I have commissioned friends in good place to get a Pension for my poor little wife. . . . Does not this sound gloomily? Well: who knows what Fate is in store: and I feel not at all downcast, but very grave and solemn just at the brink of a great voyage.

I shall send you a copy of Esmond to-morrow or so which you shall yawn over when you are inclined. But

the great comfort I have in thinking about my dear old boy is that recollection of our youth when we loved each other as I do now while I write Farewell.

Laurence has done a capital head of me ordered by Smith the Publisher: and I have ordered a copy and Lord Ashburton another. If Smith gives me this one, I shall send the copy to you. I care for you as you know, and always like to think that I am fondly and affectionately yours

W. M. T.

I sail from Liverpool on Saturday Morning by the Canada for Boston.

[Æt. 41]

To Mrs. Brookfield

[lectures; table-tipping]

Clarendon Hotel, New York,
Tuesday, 23 Dec., [1852.]

My dear Lady,—

I send you a little line and shake your hand across the water. God bless you and yours. . . .

The passage is nothing, now it is over; I am rather ashamed of gloom and disquietude about such a trifling journey. I have made scores of new acquaintances and lighted on my legs as usual. I didn't expect to like people as I do, but am agreeably disappointed and find many most pleasant companions, natural and good; natural and well read and well bred too; and I suppose am none the worse pleased because everybody has read all my books and praises my lectures; (I preach in a Unitarian Church, and the parson comes to hear me. His name is Mr. Bellows; it isn't a pretty name), and there are 2000 people nearly who come, and the lectures are so well liked that it is probable I shall do them over again. So really there is a chance of making a pretty little sum of money for old age, imbecility, and those young ladies afterwards.

Had Lady Ashburton told you of the moving tables? Try, six or seven of you, a wooden table without brass

castors; sit round it, lay your hands flat on it, not touching each other, and in half an hour or so perhaps it will begin to turn round and round. It is the most wonderful thing, but I have tried twice in vain since I saw it and did it at Mr. Bancroft's. I have not been into fashionable society yet, what they call the upper ten thousand here, but have met very likeable of the lower sort. On Sunday I went into the country, and there was a great rosy jolly family of sixteen or eighteen people, round a great tea-table; and the lady of the house told me to make myself at home—remarking my bashfulness, you know—and said, with a jolly face, and twinkling of her little eyes, "Lord bless you, we know you *all to pieces!*" and there was sitting by me O! such a pretty girl, the very picture of Rubens's second wife, and face and figure. Most of the ladies, all except this family, are as lean as greyhounds; they dress prodigiously fine, taking for their models the French actresses, I think, of the *Boulevard* theatres.

Broadway is miles upon miles long, a rush of life such as I never have seen; not so full as the Strand, but so rapid. The houses are always being torn down and built up again, the railroad cars drive slap into [the] midst of the city. There are barricades and scaffoldings banging everywhere. I have not been into a house except the fat country one, but something new is being done to it, and the hammerings are clattering in the passage, or a wall, or steps are down, or the family is going to move. Nobody is quiet here, no more am I. The rush and restlessness pleases me, and I like, for a little, the dash of the stream. I am not received as a god, which I like too. There is one paper which goes on every morning saying I am a snob, and I don't say no. Six people were reading it at breakfast this morning, and the man opposite me popped it under the table cloth. But the other papers roar with approbation. *"Criez, beuglez O! Journaux."* They don't understand French though; that bit of Béranger will hang fire. Do you remember *Jèté sur cette boule* &c.? Yes, my dear sister remembers. God Almighty bless her, and all she loves.

I may write next Saturday to Chesham Place; you will go and carry my love to those ladies, won't you? Here

comes in a man with a paper I hadn't seen; I must cut out a bit just as the actors do, but then I think you will like it, and that is why I do it. There was a very rich biography about me in one of the papers the other day, with an account of a servant, maintained in the splendour of his menial decorations.—Poor old John whose picture is in *Pendennis*. And I have filled my paper, and I shake my dear lady's hand across the roaring sea, and I know that you will be glad to know that I prosper and that I am well, and that I am yours

W. M. T.

[Æt. 41]

To the Same

["acting the lion business"; beatrix]

Direct Clarendon Hotel New York.

Philadelphia,
21 to 23 January, [1853.]

My dear lady's kind sad letter gave me pleasure, melancholy as it was. . . .

At present, I incline to come to England in June or July and get ready a new set of lectures, and bring them back with me. That second course will enable me to provide for the children and their mother finally and satisfactorily, and my mind will be easier after that, and I can sing *Nunc Dimittis* without faltering. There is money-making to try at, to be sure, and ambition,—I mean in public life; perhaps that might interest a man, but not novels, nor lectures, nor fun, any more. I don't seem to care about these any more, or for praise, or for abuse, or for reputation of that kind. That literary play is played out, and the puppets going to be locked up for good and all.

Does this melancholy come from the circumstance that I have been out to dinner and supper every night this week? O! I am tired of shaking hands with people, and acting the lion business night after night. Everybody is introduced and shakes hands. I know thousands of Colonels, professors, editors, and what not, and walk the streets guiltily, knowing that I don't know 'em, and trembling lest the man opposite to me is one of my

friends of the day before. I believe I am popular, except at Boston among the newspaper men who fired into me, but a great favorite with the *monde* there and elsewhere. Here in Philadelphia it is all praise and kindness. Do you know there are 500,000 people in Philadelphia? I daresay you had no idea thereof, and smile at the idea of there being a *monde* here and at Boston and New York. Early next month I begin at Washington and Baltimore, then D. V. to New Orleans, back to New York by Mississippi and Ohio, if the steamers don't blow up, and if they do, you know I am easy. What a weary, weary letter I am writing to you. . . . Have you heard that I have found Beatrix at New York? I have basked in her bright eyes, but Ah, me! I don't care for her, and shall hear of her marrying a New York buck with a feeling of perfect pleasure. She is really as like Beatrix, as that fellow William and I met was like Costigan. She has a dear woman of a mother upwards of fifty-five, whom I like the best, I think, and think the handsomest,—a sweet lady. What a comfort those dear Elliots are to me; I have had but one little letter from J. E., full of troubles too. She says you have been a comfort to them too. I can't live without the tenderness of some woman; and expect when I am sixty I shall be marrying a girl of eleven or twelve, innocent, barley-sugar-loving, in a pinafore.

They came and interrupted me as I was writing this, two days since; and I have been in public almost ever since. The lectures are enormously *suivies* and I read at the rate of a pound a minute nearly. The curious thing is, that I think I improve in the reading; at certain passages a sort of emotion springs up; I begin to understand how actors feel affected over and over again at the same passages of the play;—they are affected off the stage too; I hope I shan't be.

Crowe is my immensest comfort; I could not live without someone to take care of me, and he is the kindest and most affectionate henchman ever man had. I went to see Pierce Butler yesterday, Fanny's husband. I thought she would like me to see the children if I could, and I asked about them particularly, but they were not shown. I thought of good Adelaide coming to

sing to you when you were ill. I may like everyone who is kind to you, mayn't I? . . . What for has Lady Ashburton never written to me? I am writing this with a new gold pen in such a fine gold case. An old gentleman gave it to me yesterday, a white-headed old philosopher and political economist. There's something simple in the way these kind folks regard a man; they read our books as if we were Fielding, and so forth. The other night some men were talking of Dickens and Bulwer as if they were equal to Shakespeare, and I was pleased to find myself pleased at hearing them praised. The prettiest girl in Philadelphia, poor soul, has read *Vanity Fair* twelve times. I paid her a great big compliment yesterday, about her good looks of course, and she turned round delighted to her friend and said, *"Ai most tallut,"* —that is something like the pronunciation. Beatrix has an adorable pronunciation, and uses little words, which are much better than wit. And what do you think? One of the prettiest girls in Boston is to be put under my charge to go to a marriage at Washington next week. We are to travel together all the way alone—only, only, I'm not going. Young people when they are engaged here, make tours alone; fancy what the British Mrs. Grundy would say at such an idea!

There was a young quakeress at the lecture last night, listening about Fielding. Lord! Lord! how pretty she was! There are hundreds of such everywhere, airy looking little beings, with magnolia—no, not magnolia, what is that white flower you make bouquets of, camilla or camelia—complexions, and lasting not much longer. . . . God bless you and your children; write to me sometimes, and farewell.

[Æt. 44]

To William B. Reed

["what can the man mean?"]

Baltimore, Jan. 16, 1856.

My dear Reed,—

Your letter of the 9th, with one from Boston of the 8th, was given to me last night when I came home. In

what possible snow-drift have they been lying torpid? One hundred thanks for your goodness in the lecture, and all other matters; and if I can find the face to read those printed lectures over again, I'll remember your good advice. That splendid crowd on the last lecture night I knew would make our critical friend angry. I have not seen the last article, of course, and don't intend to look for it. And as I was reading the George III lecture here on Monday night, could not help asking myself, "What can the man mean by saying that I am uncharitable, unkindly—that I sneer at virtue?" and so forth. My own conscience being pretty clear, I can receive the "Bulletin's" displeasure with calmness—remembering how I used to lay about me in my own youthful days, and how I generally took a good tall mark to hit at.

Wicked weather, and an opera company which performed on the two first lecture nights here, made the audiences rather thin; but they fetched up at the third lecture, and to-night is the last; after which I go to Richmond, then to go further south, from Charlestown to Havannah* and New Orleans; perhaps to turn back and try westward, where I know there is a great crop of dollars to be reaped. But to be snow-bound in my infirm condition! I might never get out of the snow alive.

I go to Washington to-morrow for a night. I was there and dined with Crampton on Saturday. He was in good force and spirits, and I saw no signs of packing-up or portmanteaus in the hall.

I send my best regards to Mrs. Reed and your sister-in-law, and Lewis and his kind folks, and to Mac's whisky-punch, which gave *me* no headache: I'm very sorry it treated you so unkindly.—Always yours, dear Reed.

W. M. Thackeray.

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* Savannah.

[Æt. 44]

To William B. Reed

[sudden return to england]

April 24, [1856].

My dear Reed,—

When you get this, . . . remummum-ember me to kick-kick-kind ffu-fffu-ffriends . . . a sudden resolution —to—mummum-mor-row . . . in the Bu-bu-baltic.

Good-bye, my dear kind friend, and all kind friends in Philadelphia. I didn't think of going away when I left home this morning; but it's the best way.

I think it is best to send back 25 per cent to poor* ——. Will you kindly give him the enclosed; and depend on it I shall go and see Mrs. Best when I go to London, and tell her all about you. My heart is uncommonly heavy: and I am yours gratefully and affectionately.

W. M. T.

[Æt. 29] CHARLES DICKENS

1812–1870

To Washington Irving

[enthusiastic praise]

[1841.]

My dear Sir,—

There is no man in the world who could have given me the heartfelt pleasure you have, by your kind note of the thirteenth of last month. There is no living writer, and there are very few among the dead, whose approbation I should feel so proud to earn. And with everything you have written upon my shelves, and in my thoughts, and in my heart of hearts, I may honestly and truly say so. If you could know how earnestly I write this, you would be glad to read it—as I hope you will be, faintly guessing at the warmth of the hand I autobiographically hold out to you over the broad Atlantic.

* Who had managed the lectures; the last of them were not financially successful.

I wish I could find in your welcome letter some hint of an intention to visit England. I can't. I have held it at arm's length, and taken a bird's-eye view of it, after reading it a great many times, but there is no greater encouragement in it this way than on a microscopic inspection. I should love to go with you—as I have gone, God knows how often—into Little Britain, and Eastcheap, and Green Arbour Court, and Westminster Abbey. I should like to travel with you, outside the last of the coaches down to Bracebridge Hall. It would make my heart glad to compare notes with you about that shabby gentleman in the oilcloth hat and red nose, who sat in the nine-cornered back-parlor of the Mason's Arms; and about Robert Preston and the tallow-chandler's widow, whose sitting-room is second nature to me; and about all those delightful places and people that I used to walk about and dream of in the daytime, when a very small and not over-particularly-taken-care-of boy. I have a good deal to say, too, about that dashing Alonzo de Ojeda, that you can't help being fonder of than you ought to be; and much to hear concerning Moorish legend, and poor unhappy Bobadil. Diedrich Knickerbocker I have worn to death in my pocket, and yet I should show you his mutilated carcass with a joy past all expression.

I have been so accustomed to associate you with my pleasantest and happiest thoughts, and with my leisure hours, that I rush at once into full confidence with you, and fall, as it were naturally and by the very laws of gravity, into your open arms. Questions come thronging to my pen as to the lips of people who meet after long hoping to do so. I don't know what to say first or what to leave unsaid, and am constantly disposed to break off and tell you again how glad I am this moment has arrived.

My dear Washington Irving, I cannot thank you enough for your cordial and generous praise, or tell you what deep and lasting gratification it has given to me. I hope to have many letters from you, and to exchange a frequent correspondence. I send this to say so. After the first two or three I shall settle down into a connected style, and become gradually rational.

You know what the feeling is, after having written a letter, sealed it, and sent it off. I shall picture your reading this, and answering it before it has lain one night in the post-office. Ten to one that before the fastest packet could reach New York I shall be writing again.

Do you suppose the post-office clerks care to receive letters? I have my doubts. They get into a dreadful habit of indifference. A postman, I imagine, is quite callous. Conceive his delivering one to himself, without being startled by a preliminary double knock!

Always your faithful Friend,

CHARLES DICKENS.

[Æt. 30]

To W. C. MACREADY

["THIS IS NOT THE REPUBLIC I CAME TO SEE"]

BALTIMORE, Twenty-second March, 1842.

My dear Friend,—

I beg your pardon, but you were speaking of rash leaps at hasty conclusions. Are you quite sure you designed that remark for me? Have you not, in the hurry of correspondence, slipped a paragraph into my letter which belongs of right to somebody else? When did you ever find me leap at wrong conclusions? I pause for a reply.

Pray, sir, did you ever find me admiring Mr. ——? On the contrary, did you never hear of my protesting through good, better, and best report that he was not an open or a candid man, and would one day, beyond all doubt, displease you by not being so? I pause again for a reply.

Are you quite sure, Mr. Macready—and I address myself to you with the sternness of a man in the pit—are you quite sure, sir, that you do not view America through the pleasant mirage which often surrounds a thing that has been, but not a thing that is? Are you quite sure that when you were here you relished it as well as you do now when you look back upon it? The early spring birds, Mr. Macready, *do* sing in the groves that you were, very often, not over well pleased with many of the new country's social aspects. Are the birds to be trusted? Again I pause for a reply.

My dear Macready, I desire to be so honest and just to those who have so enthusiastically and earnestly welcomed me, that I burned the last letter I wrote to you—even to you to whom I would speak as to myself—rather than let it come with anything that might seem like an ill-considered word of disappointment. I preferred that you should think me neglectful (if you could imagine anything so wild) rather than I should do wrong in this respect. Still it is of no use. I *am* disappointed. This is not the republic I came to see; this is not the republic of my imagination. I infinitely prefer a liberal monarchy—even with its sickening accompaniments of court circulars—to such a government as this. The more I think of its use and strength, the poorer and more trifling in a thousand aspects it appears to my eyes. In everything of which it has made a boast—excepting its education of the people and its care for poor children—it sinks immeasurably below the level I had placed it upon; and England, even England, bad and faulty as the old land is, and miserable as millions of her people are, rises in the comparison.

You live here, Macready, as I have sometimes heard you imagining! *You!* Loving you with all my heart and soul, and knowing what your disposition really is, I would not condemn you to a year's residence on this side of the Atlantic for any money. Freedom of opinion! Where is it? I see a press more mean, and paltry, and silly, and disgraceful than any country I ever knew. If that is its standard, here it is. But I speak of Bancroft, and am advised to be silent on that subject, for he is "a black sheep—a Democrat." I speak of Bryant, and am entreated to be more careful, for the same reason. I speak of international copyright, and am implored not to ruin myself outright. I speak of Miss Martineau, and all parties—Slave Upholders and Abolitionists, Whigs, Tyler Whigs, and Democrats, shower down upon me a perfect cataract of abuse. "But what has she done? Surely she praised America enough!" "Yes, but she told us of some of our faults, and Americans can't bear to be told of their faults. Don't split on that rock, Mr. Dickens, don't write about America; we are so very suspicious."

Freedom of opinion! Macready, if I had been born here and had written my books in this country, producing them with no stamp of approval from any other land, it is my solemn belief that I should have lived and died poor, unnoticed, and a "black sheep" to boot. I never was more convinced of anything than I am of that.

The people are affectionate, generous, open-hearted, hospitable, enthusiastic, good-humoured, polite to women, frank and candid to all strangers, anxious to oblige, far less prejudiced than they have been described to be, frequently polished and refined, very seldom rude or disagreeable. I have made a great many friends here, even in public conveyances, whom I have been truly sorry to part from. In the towns I have formed perfect attachments. I have seen none of that greediness and indecorousness on which travellers have laid so much emphasis. I have returned frankness with frankness; met questions not intended to be rude, with answers meant to be satisfactory; and have not spoken to one man, woman or child of any degree who has not grown positively affectionate before we parted. In the respects of not being left alone, and of being horribly disgusted by tobacco chewing and tobacco spittle, I have suffered considerably. The sight of slavery in Virginia, the hatred of British feeling upon the subject, and the miserable hints of the impotent indignation of the South, have pained me very much! on the last head, of course, I have felt nothing but a mingled pity and amusement; on the other, sheer distress. But however much I like the ingredients of this great dish, I cannot but come back to the point upon which I started, and say that the dish itself goes against the grain with me, and that I don't like it.

You know that I am truly a Liberal. I believe I have as little pride as most men, and I am conscious of not the smallest annoyance from being "hail fellow well met" with everybody. I have not had greater pleasure in the company of any set of men among the thousands I have received than in that of the carmen of Hertford,* who presented themselves in a body in their blue frocks,

* Hartford, Connecticut.

among a crowd of well-dressed ladies and gentlemen, and bade me welcome through their spokesman. They had all read my books, and all perfectly understood them. It is not these things I have in my mind when I say that the man who comes to this country a Radical, and goes home again with his opinions unchanged, must be a Radical on reason, sympathy, and reflection, and one who has so well considered the subject that he has no chance of wavering.

We have been to Boston, Worcester, Hertford, New Haven, New York, Philadelphia, Baltimore, Washington, Fredericksburgh, Richmond, and back to Washington again. The premature heat of the weather (it was eighty yesterday in the shade) and Clay's advice—how you would like Clay!—have made us determine not to go to Charleston; but having got to Richmond, I think I should have turned back under any circumstances. We remain at Baltimore for two days, of which this is one; then we go to Harrisburgh. Then by the canal boat and the railroad over the Alleghany Mountains to Pittsburgh, then down the Ohio to Cincinnati, then to Louisville, and then to St. Louis. I have been invited to a public entertainment in every town I have entered, and have refused them; but I have excepted St. Louis as the farthest point of my travels. My friends there have passed some resolutions which Forster has, and will show you. From St. Louis we cross to Chicago, traversing immense prairies. Thence by the lakes and Detroit to Buffalo, and so to Niagara. A run into Canada follows of course, and then—let me write the blessed word in capitals—we turn towards HOME.

Kate has written to Mrs. Macready, and it is useless for me to thank you, my dearest friend, or her, for your care of our dear children, which is our constant theme of discourse. Forster has gladdened our hearts with his account of the triumph of "Acis and Galatea," and I am anxiously looking for news of the tragedy. Forrest breakfasted with us at Richmond last Saturday—he was acting there, and I invited him—and he spoke very gratefully, and very like a man, of your kindness to him when he was in London.

David Colden is as good a fellow as ever lived; and

I am deeply in love with his wife. Indeed we have received the greatest and most earnest and zealous kindness from the whole family, and quite love them all. Do you remember one Greenhow, whom you invited to pass some days with you at the hotel on the Kaatskill Mountains? He is translator to the State Office at Washington, has a very pretty wife, and a little girl of five years old. We dined with them, and had a very pleasant day. The President invited me to dinner, but I couldn't stay for it. I had a private audience, however, and we attended the public drawing-room besides.

Now, don't you rush at the quick conclusion that I have rushed at a quick conclusion. Pray, be upon your guard. If you can by any process estimate the extent of my affectionate regard for you, and the rush I shall make when I reach London to take you by your true right hand, I don't object. But let me entreat you to be very careful how you come down upon the sharpsighted individual who pens these words, which you seem to me to have done in what Willmott would call "one of Mr. Macready's rushes."

I am ever, my dear Macready,
Your faithful Friend,
CHARLES DICKENS.

[Æt. 36]

TO JOHN FORSTER

[IN PRAISE OF THE "LIFE OF GOLDSMITH"]

DEVONSHIRE TERRACE,
Saturday, Twenty-second April, 1848.

My dear Forster,—

I finished Goldsmith yesterday, after dinner, having read it from the first page to the last with the greatest care and attention.

As a picture of the time, I really think it impossible to give it too much praise. It seems to me to be the very essence of all about the time that I have ever seen in biography or fiction, presented in most wise and humane lights, and in a thousand new and just aspects. I have never liked Johnson half so well. Nobody's contempt for Boswell ought to be capable of increase, but I have never seen him in my mind's eye half so plainly.

The introduction of him is quite a masterpiece. I should point to that, if I didn't know the author, as being done by somebody with a remarkably vivid conception of what he narrated, and a most admirable and fanciful power of communicating it to another. All about Reynolds is charming: and the first account of the Literary Club and of Beauclerc as excellent a piece of description as ever I read in my life. But to read the book is to be in the time. It lives again in as fresh and lively a manner as if it were presented on an impossibly good stage by the very best actors that ever lived, or by the real actors come out of their graves on purpose.

And as to Goldsmith himself, and *his* life, and the tracing of it out in his own writings, and the manful and dignified assertion of him without any sobs, whines, or convulsions of any sort, it is throughout a noble achievement, of which, apart from any private and personal affection for you, I think (and really believe) I should feel proud, as one who had no indifferent perception of these books of his—to the best of my remembrance—when little more than a child. I was a little afraid in the beginning, when he committed those very discouraging imprudences, that you were going to champion him somewhat indiscriminately; but I very soon got over that fear, and found reason in every page to admire the sense, calmness, and moderation with which you made the love and admiration of the reader cluster about him from his youth, and strengthen with his strength—and weakness too, which is better still.

I don't quite agree with you in two small respects. First, I question very much whether it would have been a good thing for every great man to have had his Boswell, inasmuch that I think that two Boswells, or three at most, would have made great men extraordinarily false, and would have set them on always playing a part, and would have made distinguished people about them for ever restless and distrustful. I can imagine a succession of Boswells bringing about a tremendous state of falsehood in society, and playing the very devil with confidence and friendship. Secondly, I cannot help objecting to that practice (begun, I think, or greatly en-

larged by Hunt) of italicising lines and words and whole passages in extracts, without some very special reason indeed. It does appear to be a kind of assertion of the editor over the reader—almost over the author himself—which grates upon me. The author might almost as well do it himself to my thinking, as a disagreeable thing; and it is such a strong contrast to the modest, quiet, tranquil beauty of "The Deserted Village," for instance, that I would almost as soon hear "the town crier" speak the lines. The practice always reminds me of a man seeing a beautiful view, and not thinking how beautiful it is half so much as what he shall say about it.

In that picture at the close of the third book (a most beautiful one) of Goldsmith sitting looking out of window at the Temple trees, you speak of the "gray-eyed" rooks. Are you sure they are "gray-eyed"? The raven's eye is a deep lustrous black, and so, I suspect, is the rook's, except when the light shines full into it.

I have reserved for a closing word—though I *don't* mean to be eloquent about it, being far too much in earnest—the admirable manner in which the case of the literary man is stated throughout this book. It is splendid. I don't believe that any book was ever written, or anything ever done or said, half so conducive to the dignity and honour of literature as "The Life and Adventures of Oliver Goldsmith," by J. F., of the Inner Temple. The gratitude of every man who is content to rest his station and claims quietly on literature, and to make no feint of living by anything else, is your due for evermore. I have often said, here and there, when you have been at work upon the book, that I was sure it would be; and I shall insist on that debt being due to you (though there will be no need for insisting about it) as long as I have any tediousness and obstinacy to bestow on anybody. Lastly, I never will hear the biography compared with Boswell's except under vigorous protest. For I do say that it is mere folly to put into opposite scales a book, however amusing and curious, written by an unconscious coxcomb like that, and one which surveys and grandly understands the characters of all the illustrious company that move in it.

My dear Forster, I cannot sufficiently say how proud

I am of what you have done, or how sensible I am of being so tenderly connected with it. When I look over this note, I feel as if I had said no part of what I think; and yet if I were to write another I should say no more, for I can't get it out. I desire no better for my fame, when my personal dustiness shall be past the control of my love of order, than such a biographer and such a critic. And again I say, most solemnly, that literature in England has never had, and probably never will have, such a champion as you are, in right of this book.

Ever affectionately,

CHARLES DICKENS.

[Æt. 39]

To HENRY AUSTIN

["TUMBLING OVER WORKMEN"; A WRECK]

BROADSTAIRS,
Monday, Eighth September, 1851.

My dear Henry,—

Your letter, received this morning, has considerably allayed the anguish of my soul. Our letters crossed, of course, as letters under such circumstances always do.

I am perpetually wandering (in fancy) up and down the house and tumbling over the workmen; when I feel that they are gone to dinner I become low, when I look forward to their total abstinence on Sundays, I am wretched. The gravy at dinner has a taste of glue in it. I smell paint in the sea. Phantom lime attends me all the day long. I dream that I am a carpenter and can't partition off the hall. I frequently dance (with a distinguished company) in the drawing-room, and fall in the kitchen for want of a pillar.

A great to-do here. A steamer lost on the Goodwins yesterday, and our men bringing in no end of dead cattle and sheep. I stood a supper for them last night, to the unbounded gratification of Broadstairs. They came in from the wreck very wet and tired, and very much disconcerted by the nature of their prize—which, I suppose, after all, will have to be recommitted to the sea, when the hides and tallow are secured. One lean-faced boatman murmured, when they were all rumina-

tive over the bodies as they lay on the pier: "Couldn't sassages be made on it?" but retired in confusion shortly afterwards, overwhelmed by the execrations of the by-standers.

Ever affectionately,

CHARLES DICKENS.

P.S.—Sometimes I think ——'s bill will be too long to be added up until Babbage's calculating-machine shall be improved and finished. Sometimes that there is not paper enough ready made, to carry it over and bring it forward upon.

I dream, also, of the workmen every night. They make faces at me, and won't do anything.

[Æt. 40]

To W. H. WILLS

[BARKING DOGS]

TAVISTOCK HOUSE,
Thursday, Ninth December, 1852.

My dear Wills,—

I am driven mad by dogs, who have taken it into their accursed heads to assemble every morning in the piece of ground opposite, and who have barked this morning *for five hours without intermission;* positively rendering it impossible for me to work, and so making what is really ridiculous quite serious to me. I wish, between this and dinner, you would send John to see if he can hire a gun, with a few caps, some powder, and a few charges of small shot. If you duly commission him with a card, he can easily do it. And if I get those implements up here to-night, I'll be the death of some of them to-morrow morning.

Ever faithfully,

CHARLES DICKENS.

[Æt. 40]

To Clarkson Stanfield
[a nautical letter]

H. M. S. *Tavistock*,
Second January, 1853.

Yoho, old salt! Neptun' ahoy! You don't forget, messmet, as you was to meet Dick Sparkler and Mark Porpuss on the fok'sle of the good ship *Owssel Words*, Wednesday next, half-past four? Not you; for when did Stanfell ever pass his word to go anywheers and not come? Well. Belay, my heart of oak, belay! Come alongside the *Tavistock* same day and hour, 'stead of *Owssel Words*. Hail your shipmets, and they'll drop over the side and join you, like two new shillings a-droppin' into the purser's pocket. Damn all lubberly boys and swabs, and give *me* the lad with the tarry trousers, which shines to me like di'mings bright!

[Æt. 41]

To Mrs. Watson
[deserted london]

Boulogne, Wednesday,
Twenty-first September, 1853.

My dear Mrs. Watson,

The courier was unfortunately engaged. He offered to recommend another, but I had several applicants, and begged Mr. Wills to hold a grand review at the "Household Words" office, and select the man who is to bring me down as his victim. I am extremely sorry the man you recommend was not to be had. I should have been so delighted to take him.

I am finishing "The Child's History," and clearing the way through "Household Words," in general, before I go on my trip. I forget whether I told you that Mr. Egg the painter and Mr. Collins are going with me. The other day I was in town. In case you should not have heard of the condition of that deserted village, I think it worth mentioning. All the streets of any note were unpaved, mountains high, and all the omnibuses were slid-

ing down alleys, and looking into the upper windows of small houses. At eleven o'clock one morning I was positively *alone* in Bond Street. I went to one of my tailors, and he was at Brighton. A smutty-faced woman, among some gorgeous regimentals, half-finished, had not the least idea when he would be back. I went to another of my tailors, and he was in an upper room, with open windows and surrounded by mignonette-boxes, playing the piano in the bosom of his family. I went to my hosier's, and two of the least presentable of "the young men" of that elegant establishment were playing at draughts in the back shop. (Likewise I beheld a porter-pot hastily concealed under a Turkish dressing-gown of a golden pattern.) I then went wandering about to look for some ingenious portmanteau, and near the corner of St. James's Street saw a solitary being sitting in a trunk-shop, absorbed in a book, which, on a close inspection, I found to be "Bleak House." I thought this looked well, and went in. And he really was more interested in seeing me, when he knew who I was, than any face I had seen in any house, every house I knew being occupied by painters, including my own. I went to the Athenæum that same night, to get my dinner, and it was shut up for repairs. I went home late, and had forgotten the key and was locked out.

Preparations were made here, about six weeks ago, to receive the Emperor, who is not come yet. Meanwhile our countrymen (deluded in the first excitement) go about staring at these arrangements, and *will* persist in speaking an unknown tongue to the French people, who *will* speak English to them.

We are all quite well. Going to drop two small boys here, at school with a former Eton tutor highly recommended to me. Charley was heard of a day or two ago. He says his professor "is very short-sighted, always in green spectacles, always drinking weak beer, always smoking a pipe, and always at work." The last qualification seems to appear to Charley the most astonishing one.

Ever, my dear Mrs. Watson,

Most affectionately yours,

CHARLES DICKENS.

[Æt. 42]

To Arthur Ryland

["David Copperfield"—"I cannot disturb it"]

Tavistock House, Monday,
Twenty-ninth January, 1855.

My dear Mr. Ryland,

I have been in the greatest difficulty—which I am not yet out of—to know what to read at Birmingham. I fear the idea of next month is now impracticable. Which of two other months do you think would be preferable for your Birmingham objects? Next May, or next December?

Having already read two Christmas books at Birmingham, I should like to get out of that restriction, and have a swim in the broader waters of one of my long books. I have been poring over "Copperfield" (which is my favourite), with the idea of getting a reading out of it, to be called by some such name as "Young Housekeeping and Little Emily." But there is still the huge difficulty that I constructed the whole with immense pains, and have so woven it up and blended it together, that I cannot yet so separate the parts as to tell the story of David's married life with Dora, and the story of Mr. Peggotty's search for his niece, within the time. This is my object. If I could possibly bring it to bear, it would make a very attractive reading, with a strong interest in it, and a certain completeness.

This is exactly the state of the case. I don't mind confiding to you, that I never can approach the book with perfect composure (it had such perfect possession of me when I wrote it), and that I no sooner begin to try to get it into this form, than I begin to read it all, and to feel that I cannot disturb it. I have not been unmindful of the agreement we made at parting, and I have sat staring at the backs of my books for an inspiration. This project is the only one that I have constantly reverted to, and yet I have made no progress in it!

Faithfully yours always,
Charles Dickens.

[Æt. 43]

To W. M. Thackeray

["I shall never forget your words"]

Tavistock House, Friday Evening,
Twenty-third March, 1855.

My dear Thackeray,

I have read in *The Times* to-day an account of your last night's lecture, and cannot refrain from assuring you in all truth and earnestness that I am profoundly touched by your generous reference to me. I do not know how to tell you what a glow it spread over my heart. Out of its fulness I do entreat you to believe that I shall never forget your words of commendation. If you could wholly know at once how you have moved me, and how you have animated me, you would be the happier I am very certain.

Faithfully yours ever,
Charles Dickens.

[Æt. 44]

To Washington Irving

[A breakfast at Samuel Rogers's]

Tavistock House, London,
Fifth July, 1856.

My dear Irving,

If you knew how often I write to you individually and personally in my books, you would be no more surprised in seeing this note than you were in seeing me do my duty by that flowery julep (in what I dreamily apprehend to have been a former state of existence) at Baltimore.

Will you let me present to you a cousin of mine, Mr. B——, who is associated with a merchant's house in New York? Of course he wants to see you, and know you. How can *I* wonder at that? How can anybody?

I had a long talk with Leslie at the last Academy dinner (having previously been with him in Paris), and he told me that you were flourishing. I suppose you know that he wears a moustache—so do I for the matter of that, and a beard too—and that he looks like a portrait of Don Quixote.

Holland House has four-and-twenty youthful pages in it now—twelve for my lord, and twelve for my lady; and no clergyman coils his leg up under his chair all dinner-time, and begins to uncurve it when the hostess goes. No wheeled chair runs smoothly in with that beaming face in it; and ——'s little cotton pocket-handkerchief helped to make (I believe) this very sheet of paper. A half-sad, half-ludicrous story of Rogers is all I will sully it with. You know, I daresay, that for a year or so before his death he wandered, and lost himself like one of the Children in the Wood, grown up there and grown down again. He had Mrs. Procter and Mrs. Carlyle to breakfast with him one morning—only those two. Both excessively talkative, very quick and clever, and bent on entertaining him. When Mrs. Carlyle had flashed and shone before him for about three-quarters of an hour on one subject, he turned his poor old eyes on Mrs. Procter, and pointing to the brilliant discourser with his poor old finger, said (indignantly), "Who is *she?*" Upon this, Mrs. Procter, cutting in, delivered (it is her own story) a neat oration on the life and writings of Carlyle, and enlightened him in her happiest and airiest manner; all of which he heard, staring in the dreariest silence, and then said (indignantly, as before), "And who are *you?*"

Ever, my dear Irving,

Most affectionately and truly yours,

CHARLES DICKENS.

[Æt. 46]

To EDMUND YATES

[TROUBLESOME "CHRISTIAN WIRTUES"]

TAVISTOCK HOUSE, TAVISTOCK SQUARE, LONDON, W. C.,

Wednesday, Twenty-eighth April, 1858.

My dear Yates,

For a good many years I have suffered a great deal from charities, but never anything like what I suffer now. The amount of correspondence they inflict upon me is really incredible. But this is nothing. Benevolent men get behind the piers of the gates, lying in wait for my going out; and when I peep shrinkingly from my study-windows, I see their pot-bellied shadows projected on the

gravel. Benevolent bullies drive up in hansom cabs (with engraved portraits of their benevolent institutions hanging over the aprons, like banners on their outward walls), and stay long at the door. Benevolent area-sneaks get lost in the kitchens and are found to impede the circulation of the knife-cleaning machine. My man has been heard to say (at The Burton Arms) "that if it was a wicious place, well and good—*that* an't door work; but that wen all the Christian wirtues is always a-shoulderin' and a-helberin' on you in the 'all, a-tryin' to git past you and cut upstairs into master's room, why no wages as you couldn't name wouldn't make it up to you."

Persecuted ever,
CHARLES DICKENS.

[Æt. 51]

To JOHN BENNETT

[A CLOCK "WITH SOMETHING ON ITS WORKS"]

GAD'S HILL PLACE, HIGHAM BY ROCHESTER, KENT,
Monday Night, Fourteenth September, 1863.

My dear Sir,

Since my hall clock was sent to your establishment to be cleaned it has gone (as indeed it always has) perfectly well, but has struck the hours with great reluctance, and after enduring internal agonies of a most distressing nature; it has now ceased striking altogether. Though a happy release for the clock, this is not convenient to the household. If you can send down any confidential person with whom the clock can confer, I think it may have something on its works that it would be glad to make a clean breast of.

Faithfully yours,
CHARLES DICKENS.

[Æt. 53]

To Thomas Mitton

[A railway wreck]

Gad's Hill Place, Higham by Rochester, Kent,
Tuesday, Thirteenth June, 1865.

My dear Mitton,

I should have written to you yesterday or the day before, if I had been quite up to writing.

I was in the only carriage that did not go over into the stream. It was caught upon the turn by some of the ruin of the bridge, and hung suspended and balanced in an apparently impossible manner. Two ladies were my fellow-passengers, an old one and a young one. This is exactly what passed. You may judge from it the precise length of the suspense: Suddenly we were off the rail, and beating the ground as the car of a half-emptied balloon might. The old lady cried out, "My God!" and the young one screamed. I caught hold of them both (the old lady sat opposite and the young one on my left), and said: "We can't help ourselves, but we can be quiet and composed. Pray don't cry out." The old lady immediately answered: "Thank you. Rely upon me. Upon my soul I will be quiet." We were then all tilted down together in a corner of the carriage, and stopped. I said to them thereupon: "You may be sure nothing worse can happen. Our danger *must* be over. Will you remain here without stirring, while I get out of the window?" They both answered quite collectedly, "Yes," and I got out without the least notion what had happened. Fortunately I got out with great caution and stood upon the step. Looking down I saw the bridge gone, and nothing below me but the line of rail. Some people in the two other compartments were madly trying to plunge out of window, and had no idea that there was an open swampy field fifteen feet down below them, and nothing else! The two guards (one with his face cut) were running up and down on the down side of the bridge (which was not torn up) quite wildly. I called out to them: "Look at me. Do stop an instant and look at me, and tell me whether you don't know me." One of them answered: "We know you very well, Mr. Dickens." "Then,"

I said, "my good fellow, for God's sake give me your key, and send one of those labourers here, and I'll empty this carriage." We did it quite safely, by means of a plank or two, and when it was done I saw all the rest of the train, except the two baggage vans, down in the stream. I got into the carriage again for my brandy flask, took off my travelling hat for a basin, climbed down the brickwork, and filled my hat with water.

Suddenly I came upon a staggering man covered with blood (I think he must have been flung clean out of his carriage), with such a frightful cut across the skull that I couldn't bear to look at him. I poured some water over his face and gave him some drink, then gave him some brandy, and laid him down on the grass, and he said, "I am gone," and died afterwards. Then I stumbled over a lady lying on her back against a little pollard-tree, with the blood streaming over her face (which was lead color) in a number of distinct little streams from the head. I asked her if she could swallow a little brandy and she just nodded, and I gave her some and left her for somebody else. The next time I passed her she was dead. Then a man, examined at the inquest yesterday (who evidently had not the least remembrance of what really passed) came running up to me and implored me to help him find his wife, who was afterwards found dead. No imagination can conceive the ruin of the carriages, or the extraordinary weights under which the people were lying, or the complications into which they were twisted up among iron and wood, and mud and water.

I don't want to be examined at the inquest and I don't want to write about it. I could do no good either way, and I could only seem to speak about myself, which, of course, I would rather not do. I am keeping very quiet here. I have a—I don't know what to call it—constitutional (I suppose) presence of mind, and was not in the least fluttered at the time. I instantly remembered that I had the MS. of a number with me, and clambered back into the carriage for it. But in writing these scanty words of recollection I feel the shake and am obliged to stop.

Ever faithfully,
CHARLES DICKENS.

[Æt. 55]

To Miss Dickens

[second visit to america]

Parker House, Boston,
Sunday, First December, 1867.

I received yours of the Eighteenth November, yesterday. As I left Halifax in the *Cuba* that very day, you probably saw us telegraphed in *The Times* on the Nineteenth.

I think you had best in future (unless I give you intimation to the contrary) address your letters to me, at the Westminster Hotel, Irving Place, New York City. It is a more central position than this, and we are likely to be much more there than here. I am going to set up a brougham in New York, and keep my rooms at that hotel.

They are said to be a very quiet audience here, appreciative but not demonstrative. I shall try to change their character a little.

I have been going on very well. A horrible custom obtains in these parts of asking you to dinner somewhere at half-past two, and to supper somewhere else about eight. I have run this gauntlet more than once, and its effect is, that there is no day for any useful purpose, and that the length of the evening is multiplied by a hundred. Yesterday I dined with a club at half-past two, and came back here at half-past eight with a general impression that it was at least two o'clock in the morning. Two days before I dined with Longfellow at half-past two, and came back at eight, supposing it to be midnight. To-day we have a state dinner-party in our rooms at six. Mr. and Mrs. Fields, and Mr. and Mrs. Bigelow. (He is a friend of Forster's, and was American Minister in Paris.) There are no negro waiters here, all the servants are Irish—willing, but not able. The dinners and wines are very good. I keep our own rooms well ventilated by opening the windows, but no window is ever opened in the halls or passages, and they are so overheated by a great furnace, that they make me faint and sick. The air is like that of a pre-Adamite ironing-day in full blast. Your respected parent is immensely popu-

lar in Boston society, and its cordiality and unaffected heartiness are charming. I wish I could carry it with me.

The leading New York papers have sent men over for to-morrow night with instructions to telegraph columns of descriptions. Great excitement and expectation everywhere. Fields says he has looked forward to it so long that he knows that he will die at five minutes to eight.

At the New York barriers, where the tickets are on sale and the people ranged as at the Paris theatres, speculators went up and down offering "twenty dollars for anybody's place." The money was in no case accepted. One man sold two tickets for the second, third, and fourth night "for one ticket for the first, fifty dollars" (about seven pounds ten shillings) "and a brandy cocktail," which is an iced bitter drink. The weather has been rather muggy and languid until yesterday, when there was the coldest wind blowing that I ever felt. In the night it froze very hard, and to-day the sky is beautiful.

Tuesday, Third December.

Most magnificent reception last night, and most signal and complete success. Nothing could be more triumphant. The people will hear of nothing else and talk of nothing else. Nothing that was ever done here, they all agree, evoked any approach to such enthusiasm. I was quite as cool and quick as if I were reading at Greenwich, and went at it accordingly. My love to Mr. and Mrs. Hulkes and the boy, and to Mr. and Mrs. Malleson.

[Æt. 56]

To Mrs. James T. Fields

[welcome home from america]

Gad's Hill, Higham by Rochester, Kent,
Twenty-fifth May, 1868.

My dear Mrs. Fields,

As you ask me about the dogs, I begin with them. When I came down first, I came to Gravesend, five miles off. The two Newfoundland dogs, coming to meet me with the usual carriage and the usual driver, and beholding me coming in my usual dress out at the usual

door, it struck me that their recollection of my having been absent for any unusual time was at once cancelled. They behaved (they are both young dogs) exactly in their usual manner; coming behind the basket phaeton as we trotted along, and lifting their heads to have their ears pulled—a special attention which they receive from no one else. But when I drove into the stable-yard, Linda (the St. Bernard) was greatly excited; weeping profusely, and throwing herself on her back that she might caress my foot with her great fore-paws. Mamie's little dog, too, Mrs. Bouncer, barked in the greatest agitation on being called down and asked by Mamie, "Who is this?" and tore round and round me, like the dog in the Faust outlines. You must know that all the farmers turned out on the road in their market-chaises to say, "Welcome home, sir!" and that all the houses along the road were dressed with flags; and that our servants, to cut out the rest, had dressed this house so that every brick of it was hidden. They had asked Mamie's permission to "ring the alarm-bell" (!) when master drove up, but Mamie, having some slight idea that that compliment might awaken master's sense of the ludicrous, had recommended bell abstinence. But on Sunday the village choir (which includes the bell-ringers) made amends. After some unusually brief pious reflections in the crowns of their hats at the end of the sermon, the ringers bolted out, and rang like mad until I got home. There had been a conspiracy among the villagers to take the horse out, if I had come to our own station, and draw me here. Mamie and Georgy had got wind of it and warned me.

Divers birds sing here all day, and the nightingales all night! The place is lovely, and in perfect order. I have put five mirrors in the Swiss chalet (where I write) and they reflect and refract in all kinds of ways the leaves that are quivering at the windows, and the great fields of waving corn, and the sail-dotted river. My room is up among the branches of the trees; and the birds and the butterflies fly in and out, and the green branches shoot in, at the open windows, and the lights and shadows of the clouds come and go with the rest of the company. The scent of the flowers, and indeed of everything that is growing for miles and miles, is most delicious.

Dolby (who sends a word of messages) found his wife much better than he expected, and the children (wonderful to relate!) perfect. The little girl winds up her prayers every night with a special commendation to Heaven of me and the pony—as if I must mount him to get there! I dine with Dolby (I was going to write "him," but found it would look as if I were going to dine with the pony) at Greenwich this very day, and if your ears do not burn from six to nine this evening, then the Atlantic is a non-conductor.

It is time I should explain the otherwise inexplicable enclosure. Will you tell Fields, with my love (I suppose he hasn't used *all* the pens yet?), that I think there is in Tremont Street a set of my books, sent out by Chapman, not arrived when I departed. Such set of the immortal works of our illustrious, etc., is designed for the gentleman to whom the enclosure is addressed. If T., F. and Co., will kindly forward the set (carriage paid) with the enclosure to ——'s address, I will invoke new blessings on their heads, and will get Dolby's little daughter to mention them nightly.

"No Thoroughfare" is very shortly coming out in Paris, where it is now in active rehearsal. It is still playing here, but without Fechter, who has been very ill. The doctor's dismissal of him to Paris, however, and his getting better there, enables him to get up the play there. He and Wilkie missed so many pieces of stage-effect here, that, unless I am quite satisfied with his report, I shall go over and try my stage-managerial hand at the Vaudeville Theatre.

Ever, my dear Mrs. Fields,

Your most affectionate friend,

CHARLES DICKENS.

[Æt. 56]

To Edward Bulwer Lytton Dickens *
[A letter of good counsel]

[1868]

My dearest Plorn,

I write this note to-day because your going away is much upon my mind, and because I want you to have a few parting words from me to think of now and then at quiet times. I need not tell you that I love you dearly, and am very, very sorry in my heart to part with you. But this life is half made up of partings, and these pains must be borne. It is my comfort and my sincere conviction that you are going to try the life for which you are best fitted. I think its freedom and wildness more suited to you than any experiment in a study or office would ever have been; and without that training, you could have followed no other suitable occupation.

What you have already wanted until now has been a set, steady, constant purpose. I therefore exhort you to persevere in a thorough determination to do whatever you have to do as well as you can do it. I was not so old as you are now when I first had to win my food, and do this out of this determination, and I have never slackened in it since.

Never take a mean advantage of anyone in any transaction, and never be hard upon people who are in your power. Try to do to others, as you would have them do to you, and do not be discouraged if they fail sometimes. It is much better for you that they should fail in obeying the greatest rule laid down by our Saviour, than that you should.

I put a New Testament among your books, for the very same reasons, and with the very same hopes that made me write an easy account of it for you, when you were a little child; because it is the best book that ever was or will be known in the world, and because it teaches you the best lessons by which any human creature who tries to be truthful and faithful to duty can possibly be guided. As your brothers have gone away, one by one,

* His youngest son, leaving for Australia.

I have written to each such words as I am now writing to you, and have entreated them all to guide themselves by this book, putting aside the interpretations and inventions of men.

You will remember that you have never at home been wearied about religious observances or mere formalities. I have always been anxious not to weary my children with such things before they are old enough to form opinions respecting them. You will therefore understand the better that I now most solemnly impress upon you the truth and beauty of the Christian religion, as it came from Christ Himself, and the impossibility of your going far wrong if you humbly but heartily respect it.

Only one thing more on this head. The more we are in earnest as to feeling it, the less we are disposed to hold forth about it. Never abandon the wholesome practice of saying your own private prayers, night and morning. I have never abandoned it myself, and I know the comfort of it.

I hope you will always be able to say in after life, that you had a kind father. You cannot show your affection for him so well, or make him so happy, as by doing your duty.

Your affectionate Father,
CHARLES DICKENS.

[Æt. 44] ROBERT BROWNING
1812-1889

To MRS. MARTIN

[THE DEATH OF MRS. BROWNING'S FATHER]

FLORENCE, May 3, 1857.

My dear Mrs. Martin,—

Truest thanks for your letter. We had the intelligence from George last Thursday week, having been only prepared for the illness by a note received from Arabel the day before. Ba* was sadly affected at first; miserable to see and hear. After a few days tears came to her relief. She is now very weak and prostrated, but im-

* Mrs. Browning.

proving in strength of body and mind: I have no fear for the result. I suppose you know, at least, the very little that we know; and how unaware poor Mr. Barrett was of his imminent death: "he bade them," says Arabel, "make him comfortable for the night, but a moment before the last." And he had dismissed her and her aunt about an hour before, with a cheerful or careless word about "wishing them good night." So it is all over now, all hope of better things, or a kind answer to entreaties such as I have seen Ba write in the bitterness of her heart. There must have been something in the organisation, or education, at least, that would account for and extenuate all this; but it has caused grief enough, I know; and now here is a new grief not likely to subside very soon. Not that Ba is other than reasonable and just to herself in the matter: she does not reproach herself at all; it is all mere grief, as I say, that this should have been *so;* and I sympathise with her there.

George wrote very affectionately to tell me; and dear, admirable Arabel sent a note the very next day to prove to Ba that there was nothing to fear on her account. Since then we have heard nothing. The funeral was to take place in Herefordshire. We had just made up our minds to go on no account to England this year. Ba felt the restraint on her too horrible to bear. I will, or she will, no doubt, write and tell you of herself; and you must write, dear Mrs. Martin, will you not?

Kindest regard to Mr. Martin and all.

Yours faithfully ever,

ROBERT BROWNING.

[Æt. 46]

To Mr. Ruskin

[A POSTSCRIPT TO A LETTER BY HIS WIFE]

[ROME, 43 BOCCA DI LEONE,

January 1, 1859.]

I am to say something, dear Ruskin; it shall be only the best of wishes for this and all other years; go on again like the noble and dear man you are to us all, and especially to us two out of them all. Whenever I chance on an extract, a report, it lights up the dull newspaper stuff wrapt round it and makes me glad at

heart and clearer in head. We, for our part, have just sent off a corrected "Aurora Leigh," which is the better for a deal of pains, we hope, and my wife deserves. There will be a portrait from a photograph done at Havre without retouching—good, I think. Truest love to you and yours—your father and mother. Do help us by a word every now and then.

Affectionately yours,
R. B.

[Æt. 49]

To Miss Haworth

[THE DEATH OF MRS. BROWNING]

Florence, July 20, 1861.

My dear Friend,—

I well know you feel as you say, for her once and for me now. Isa Blagden, perfect in all kindness to me, will have told you something perhaps—and one day I shall see you and be able to tell you myself as much as I can. The main comfort is that she suffered very little pain, none beside that ordinarily attending the simple attacks of cold and cough she was subject to—had no presentiment of the result whatever, and was consequently spared the misery of knowing she was about to leave us; she was smilingly assuring me she was "better," "quite comfortable—if I would but come to bed," to within a few minutes of the last. I think I foreboded evil at Rome, certainly from the beginning of the week's illness—but when I reasoned about it, there was no justifying fear—she said on the last evening "it is merely the old attack, not so severe a one as that of two years ago—there is no doubt I shall soon recover," and we talked over plans for the summer, and next year. I sent the servants away and her maid to bed—so little reason for disquietude did there seem. Through the night she slept heavily, and brokenly—that was the bad sign—but then she would sit up, take her medicine, say unrepeatable things to me and sleep again. At four o'clock there were symptoms that alarmed me; I called the maid and sent for the doctor. She smiled as I proposed to bathe her feet, "Well, you *are* determined to make an exaggerated case of it!" Then came what my heart will keep till I

see her again and longer—the most perfect expression of her love to me within my whole knowledge of her. Always smiling, happily, and with a face like a girl's—and in a few minutes she died in my arms; her head on my cheek. These incidents so sustain me that I tell them to her beloved ones as their right: there was no lingering, nor acute pain, nor consciousness of separation, but God took her to himself as you would lift a sleeping child from a dark, uneasy bed into your arms and the light. Thank God. Annunziata thought by her earnest ways with me, happy and smiling as they were, that she must have been aware of our parting's approach—but she was quite conscious, had words at command, and yet did not even speak of Peni, who was in the next room. Her last word was when I asked "How do you feel?"—"Beautiful." You know I have her dearest wishes and interests to attend to *at once*—her child to care for, educate, establish properly; and my own life to fulfil as properly,—all just as she would require were she here. I shall leave Italy altogether for years—go to London for a few days' talk with Arabel—then go to my father and begin to try leisurely what will be the best for Peni—but no more "housekeeping" for me, even with my family. I shall grow, still, I hope—but my root is taken and remains.

I know you always loved her, and me too in my degree. I shall always be grateful to those who loved her, and that, I repeat, you did.

She was, and is, lamented with extraordinary demonstrations, if one consider it. The Italians seem to have understood her by an instinct. I have received strange kindness from everybody. Pen is very well—very dear and good, anxious to comfort me as he calls it. He can't know his loss yet. After years, his will be worse than mine—he will want what he never had—that is, for the time when he could be helped by her wisdom, and genius and piety—I *have* had everything and shall not forget.

God bless you, dear friend. I believe I shall set out in a week. Isa goes with me—dear, true heart. You, too, would do what you could for us were you here and your assistance needful. A letter from you came a day or two before the end—she made me enquire about the

Frescobaldi Palace for you,—Isa wrote to you in consequence. I shall be heard of at 151, rue de Grenelle, St. Germain.

Faithfully and affectionately yours,
ROBERT BROWNING.

[Æt. 40]

ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING
1806–1861

To MRS. MARTIN
[HER MARRIAGE TO ROBERT BROWNING]

COLLEGIO FERDINANDO, PISA,
October 20 [?], 1846.

My dearest Mrs. Martin,—

Will you believe that I began a letter to you before I took this step, to give you the whole story of the impulses towards it, feeling strongly that I owed what I considered my justification to such dear friends as yourself and Mr. Martin, that you might not hastily conclude that you had thrown away upon one who was quite unworthy the regard of years? I had begun such a letter—when, by the plan of going to Little Bookham, my plans were all hurried forward—changed—driven prematurely into action, and the last hours of agitation and deep anguish—for it was the deepest of its kind, to leave Wimpole Street and those whom I tenderly loved—*so* would not admit of my writing or thinking: only I was able to think that my beloved sisters would send you some account of me when I was gone. And now I hear from them that your generosity has not waited for a letter from me to do its best for me, and that instead of being vexed, as you might well be, at my leaving England without a word sent to you, you have used kind offices in my behalf, you have been more than the generous and affectionate friend I always considered you. So my first words must be that I am deeply grateful to you, my very dear friend, and that to the last moment of my life I shall remember the claim you have on my gratitude. Generous people are inclined to acquit generously; but it has been very painful to me to observe that with all my mere friends I have found

more sympathy and *trust,* than in those who are of my own household and who have been daily witnesses of my life. I do not say this for papa, who is peculiar and in a peculiar position; but it pained me that ——, who *knew* all that passed last year—for instance, about Pisa—who knew that the alternative of making a single effort to secure my health during the winter was the severe displeasure I have incurred now, and that the fruit of yielding myself a prisoner was the sense of being of no use nor comfort to any soul, papa having given up coming to see me except for five minutes a day; ——, who said to me with his own lips, "He does not love you—do not think it" (said and repeated it two months ago)—that —— should now turn round and reproach me for want of affection towards my family, for not letting myself drop like a dead weight into the abyss, a sacrifice without an object and expiation—this did surprise me and pain me—pained me more than all papa's dreadful words. But the personal feeling is nearer with most of us than the tenderest feeling for another; and my family had been so accustomed to the idea of my living on and on in that room, that while my heart was eating itself, their love for me was consoled, and at last the evil grew scarcely perceptible. It was no want of love in them, and quite natural in itself: we all get used to the thought of a tomb; and I was buried, that was the whole. It was a little thing even for myself a short time ago, and really it would be a pneumatological curiosity if I could describe and let you see how perfectly for years together, after* what broke my heart at Torquay, I lived on the outside of my own life, blindly and darkly from day to day, as completely dead to hope of any kind as if I had my face against a grave, never feeling a personal instinct, taking trains of thought to carry out as an occupation absolutely indifferent to the *me* which is in every human being. Nobody quite understood this of me, because I am not morally a coward, and have a hatred of all the forms of audible groaning. But God knows what is within, and how utterly I had abdicated myself and thought it not worth while to put out my finger to touch

* The death by drowning of her brother.

my share of life. Even my poetry, which suddenly grew an interest, was a thing on the outside of me, a thing to be done, and then done! What people said of it did not touch *me*. A thoroughly morbid and desolate state it was, which I look back now to with the sort of horror with which one would look to one's graveclothes, if one had been clothed in them by mistake during a trance.

And now I will tell you. It is nearly two years ago since I have known Mr. Browning. Mr. Kenyon wished to bring him to see me five years ago, as one of the lions of London who roared the gentlest and was best worth my knowing; but I refused then, in my blind dislike to seeing strangers. Immediately, however, after the publication of my last volumes, he wrote to me, and we had a correspondence which ended in my agreeing to receive him as I never had received any other man. I did not know why, but it was utterly impossible for me to refuse to receive him, though I consented against my will. He writes the most exquisite letters possible, and has a way of putting things which I have not, a way of putting aside—so he came. He came, and with our personal acquaintance began his attachment for me, a sort of *infatuation* call it, which resisted the various denials which were my plain duty at the beginning, and has persisted past them all. I began with a grave assurance that I was in an exceptional position and saw him just in consequence of it, and that if ever he recurred to that subject again I never could see him again while I lived; and he believed me and was silent. To my mind, indeed, it was a bare impulse—a generous man of quick sympathies taking up a sudden interest with both hands! So I thought; but in the meantime the letters and the visits rained down more and more, and in every one there was something which was too slight to analyse and notice, but too decided not to be understood; so that at last, when the "proposed respect" of the silence gave way, it was rather less dangerous. So then I showed him how he was throwing into the ashes his best affections—how the common gifts of youth and cheerfulness were behind me—how I had not strength, even of *heart,* for the ordinary duties of life—everything I told him and showed him. "Look at this—and this—and this,"

throwing down all my disadvantages. To which he did not answer by a single compliment, but simply that he had not then to choose, and that I might be right or he might be right, he was not there to decide; but that he loved me and should to his last hour: He said that the freshness of youth had passed with him also, and that he had studied the world out of books and seen many women, yet had never loved one until he had seen me. That he knew himself, and knew that, if ever so repulsed, he should love me to his last hour—it should be first and last. At the same time, he would not tease me, he would wait twenty years if I pleased, and then, if life lasted so long for both of us, then when it was ending perhaps, I might understand him and feel that I might have trusted him. For my health, he had believed when he first spoke that I was suffering from an incurable injury of the spine, and that he never could hope to see me stand up before his face, and he appealed to my womanly sense of what a pure attachment should be—whether such a circumstance, if it had been true, was inconsistent with it. He preferred, he said, of free and deliberate choice, to be allowed to sit only an hour a day by my side, to the fulfilment of the brightest dream which should exclude me, in any possible world.

I tell you so much, my ever dear friend, that you may see the manner of man I have had to do with, and the sort of attachment which for nearly two years has been drawing and winning me. I know better than any in the world, indeed, what Mr. Kenyon once unconsciously said before me—that "Robert Browning is great in everything." Then, when you think how this element of an affection so pure and persistent, cast into my dreary life, must have acted on it—how little by little I was drawn into the persuasion that something was left, and that still I could do something to the happiness of another—and he what he was, for I have deprived myself of the privilege of praising him—then it seemed worth while to take up with that unusual energy (for me!), expended in vain last year, the advice of the physicians that I should go to a warm climate for the winter. Then came the Pisa conflict of last year. For years I had looked with a sort of indifferent expectation towards Italy, knowing

and feeling that I should escape there the annual relapse, yet, with that *laisser aller* manner which had become a habit to me, unable to form a definite wish about it. But last year, when all this happened to me, and I was better than usual in the summer, I *wished* to make the experiment—to live the experiment out, and see whether there was hope for me or not hope. Then came Dr. Chambers, with his encouraging opinion. "I wanted simply a warm climate and *air*," he said; "I might be well if I pleased." Followed what you know—or do not precisely know—the pain of it was acutely felt by me; for I never had doubted but that papa would catch at any human chance of restoring my health. I was under the delusion always that the difficulty of making such trials lay in *me*, and not in *him*. His manner of acting towards me last summer was one of the most painful griefs of my life, because it involved a disappointment in the affections: My dear father is a very peculiar person. He is naturally stern, and has exaggerated notions of authority, but these things go with high and noble qualities; and as for feeling, the water is under the rock, and I had faith. Yes, and have it. I admire such qualities as he has—fortitude, integrity. I loved him for his courage in adverse circumstances which were yet felt by him more literally than I could feel them. Always he has had the greatest power over my heart, because I am of those weak women who reverence strong men. By a word he might have bound me to him hand and foot. Never has he spoken a gentle word to me or looked a kind look which has not made in me large results of gratitude, and throughout my illness the sound of his step on the stairs has had the power of quickening my pulse—I have loved him so and love him. Now if he had said last summer that he was reluctant for me to leave him—if he had even allowed me to think *by mistake* that his affection for me was the motive of such reluctance—I was ready to give up Pisa in a moment, and I told him as much. Whatever my new impulses towards life were, my love for him (taken so) would have resisted all—I loved him so dearly. But his course was otherwise, quite otherwise, and I was wounded to the bottom of my heart—cast off when I was ready to cling to him. In the mean-

while, at my side was another; I was driven and I was drawn. Then at last I said, "If you like to let this winter decide it, you may. I will allow of no promises nor engagement. I cannot go to Italy, and I know, as nearly as a human creature can know any fact, that I shall be ill again through the influence of this English winter. If I am, you will see plainer the foolishness of this persistence; if I am not, I will do what you please." And his answer was, "If you are ill and keep your resolution of not marrying me under those circumstances, I will keep mine and love you till God shall take us both." This was in last autumn, and the winter came with its miraculous mildness, as you know, and I was saved as I dared not hope; my word therefore was claimed in the spring. Now do you understand, and will you feel for me? An application to my father was certainly the obvious course, if it had not been for his peculiar nature and my peculiar position. But there is no speculation in the case; it is a matter of *knowledge* that if Robert had applied to him in the first instance he would have been forbidden the house without a moment's scruple; and if in the last (as my sisters thought best as a respectable *form*), I should have been incapacitated from any after-exertion by the horrible scenes to which, as a thing of course, I should have been exposed. Papa will not bear some subjects, it is a thing *known;* his peculiarity takes that ground to the largest. Not one of his children will ever marry without a breach, which we all know, though he probably does not—deceiving himself in a setting up of *obstacles,* whereas the real obstacle is in his own mind. In my case there was, or would have been, a great deal of apparent reason to hold by; my health would have been motive enough—ostensible motive. I see that precisely as others may see it. Indeed, if I were charged now with want of generosity for casting myself so, a dead burden, on the man I love, nothing of the sort could surprise me. It was what occurred to myself, that thought was, and what occasioned a long struggle and months of agitation, and which nothing could have overcome but the very uncommon affection of a very uncommon person, reasoning out to me the great fact of love making its own level. As to vanity and selfishness

blinding me, certainly I may have made a mistake, and the future may prove it, but still more certainly I was not blinded *so*. On the contrary, never have I been more humbled, and never less in danger of considering any personal pitiful advantage, than throughout this affair. You, who are generous and a woman, will believe this of me, even if you do not comprehend the *habit* I had fallen into of casting aside the consideration of possible happiness of my own. But I was speaking of papa. Obvious it was that the application to him was a mere form. I knew the result of it. I had made up my mind to act upon my full right of taking my own way. I had long believed such an act (the most strictly personal act of one's life) to be within the rights of every person of mature age, man or woman, and I had resolved to exercise that right in my own case by a resolution which had slowly ripened. All the other doors of life were shut to me, and shut me in as in a prison, and only before this door stood one whom I loved best and who loved me best, and who invited me out through it for the good's sake which he thought I could do him. Now if for the sake of the mere form I had applied to my father, and if, as he would have done directly, he had set up his "curse" against the step I proposed to take, would it have been doing otherwise than placing a knife in his hand? A few years ago, merely through the reverberation of what he said to another on a subject like this, I fell on the floor in a fainting fit, and was almost delirious afterwards. I cannot bear some words. I would much rather have blows without them. In my actual state of nerves and physical weakness, it would have been the sacrifice of my whole life—of my convictions, of my affections, and, above all, of what the person dearest to me persisted in calling *his* life, and the good of it—if I had observed that "form." Therefore, wrong or right, I determined not to observe it, and, wrong or right, I did and do consider that in not doing so I sinned against no duty. That I was *constrained* to act clandestinely, and did not *choose* to do so, God is witness, and will set it down as my heavy misfortune and not my fault. Also, up to the very last act we stood in the light of day for the whole world, if it pleased, to judge us. I never saw

him out of the Wimpole Street house; he came twice a week to see me—or rather, three times in the fortnight, openly in the sight of all, and this for nearly two years, and neither more nor less. Some jests used to be passed upon us by my brothers, and I allowed them without a word, but it would have been infamous in me to have taken any into my confidence who would have suffered, as a direct consequence, a blighting of his own prospects. My secrecy towards them all was my simple duty towards them all, and what they call want of affection was an affectionate consideration for them. My sisters did indeed know the truth to a certain point. They knew of the attachment and engagement—I could not help that—but the whole of the event I kept from them with a strength and resolution which really I did not know to be in me, and of which nothing but a sense of the injury to be done to them by a fuller confidence, and my tender gratitude and attachment to them for all their love and goodness, could have rendered me capable. Their faith in me, and undeviating affection for me, I shall be grateful for to the end of my existence, and to the extent of my power of feeling gratitude. My dearest sisters!—especially, let me say, my own beloved Arabel, who, with no consolation except the exercise of a most generous tenderness, has looked only to what she considered my good—never doubting me, never swerving for one instant in her love for me. May God reward her as I cannot. Dearest Henrietta loves me too, but loses less in me, and has reasons for not misjudging me. But both my sisters have been faultless in their bearing towards me, and never did I love them so tenderly as I love them now.

The only time I met R. B. clandestinely was in the parish church, where we were married before two witnesses—it was the first and only time. I looked, he says, more dead than alive, and can well believe it, for I all but fainted on the way, and had to stop for sal volatile at a chemist's shop. The support through it all was *my trust in him,* for no woman who ever committed a like act of trust has had stronger motives to hold by. Now may I not tell you that his genius, and all but miraculous attainments, are the least things in him, the moral nature being of the very noblest, as all who ever

knew him admit? Then he has had that wide experience of men which ends by throwing the mind back on itself and God; there is nothing incomplete in him, except as all humanity is incompleteness, the only wonder is how such a man, whom any woman could have loved, should have loved *me;* but men of genius, you know, are apt to love with their imagination. Then there is something in the sympathy, the strange straight sympathy which unites us on all subjects. If it were not that I look up to him, we should be too alike to be together perhaps, but I know my place better than he does, who is too humble. Oh, you cannot think how well we get on after six weeks of marriage. If I suffer again it will not be through *him.* Some day, dearest Mrs. Martin, I will show you and dear Mr. Martin how his *prophecy was fulfilled,* saving some picturesque particulars. I did not know before that Saul was among the prophets.

My poor husband suffered very much from the constraint imposed on him by my position, and did, for the first time in his life, for my sake do that in secret which he could not speak upon the housetops. *Mea culpa* all of it! If one of us two is to be blamed, it is I, at whose representation of circumstances he submitted to do violence to his own self-respect. I would not suffer him to tell even our dear common friend Mr. Kenyon. I felt that it would be throwing on dear Mr. Kenyon a painful responsibility, and involve him in the blame ready to fall. And dear dear Mr. Kenyon, like the noble, generous friend I love so deservedly, comprehends all at a word, sends us *not* his forgiveness, but his sympathy, his affection, the kindest words which can be written! I cannot tell you all his inexpressible kindness to us both. He justifies us to the uttermost, and, in that, all the grateful attachment we had, each on our side, so long professed towards him. Indeed, in a note I had from him yesterday, he uses this strong expression after gladly speaking of our successful journey: "I considered that you had *perilled your life* upon this undertaking, and, reflecting upon your last position, I thought that *you had done well.*" But my life was not perilled in the journey. The agitation and fatigue were evils, to be sure, and Mrs. Jameson, who met us in Paris by a happy accident, thought me

"looking horribly ill" at first, and persuaded us to rest there for a week on the promise of accompanying us herself to Pisa to help Robert to take care of me. He, who was in a fit of terror about me, agreed at once, and so she came with us, she and her young niece, and her kindness leaves us both very grateful. So kind she was, and is—for still she is in Pisa—opening her arms to us and calling us "children of light" instead of ugly names, and declaring that she should have been "proud" to have had anything to do with our marriage. Indeed, we hear every day kind speeches and messages from people such as Mr. Chorley of the "Athenæum," who "has tears in his eyes," Monckton Milnes, Barry Cornwall, and other friends of my husband's, but who only know *me* by my books, and I want the love and sympathy of those who love me and whom I love. I was talking of the influence of the journey. The change of air has done me wonderful good notwithstanding the fatigue, and I am renewed to the point of being able to throw off most of my invalid habits, and of walking quite like a woman. Mrs. Jameson said the other day, "You are not *improved,* you are *transformed.*" We have most comfortable rooms here at Pisa, and have taken them for six months, in the best situation for health, and close to the Duomo and Leaning Tower. It is a beautiful, solemn city, and we have made acquaintance with Professor Ferucci, who is about to admit us to [a sight] of the [University Lib]rary. We shall certainly [spend] next summer in Italy *somewhere,* and [talk] of Rome for the next winter, but, of course, this is all in air. Let me hear from you, dearest Mrs. Martin, and direct "M. Browning, Poste Restante, Pisa" —it is best. Just before we left Paris I wrote to my aunt Jane, and from Marseilles to Bummy, but from neither have I heard yet.

With best love to dearest Mr. Martin, ever both my dear kind friends,

Your affectionate and grateful

Ba.

[Æt. 46]

To Miss Mitford

[GEORGE SAND]

138 Avenue des Ch.-Élysées,
April 7, 1852.

What a time seems to have passed since I wrote to you, my ever loved friend. Again and again I have been on the point of writing, and something has stopped me always. I have wished to wait till I had more about this and that to gossip of, and so the time went on. Now I am getting impatient to have news of you, and to learn whether the lovely spring has brought you any good yet as to health and strength. Don't take vengeance on my silence, but write, write. . . .

Yes, I want to see Béranger, and so does Robert. George Sand we came to know a great deal more of. I think Robert saw her six times. Once he met her near the Tuileries, offered her his arm, and walked with her the whole length of the gardens. She was not on that occasion looking as well as usual, being a little too much "endimanchée" in terrestrial lavenders and super-celestial blues—not, in fact, dressed with the remarkable taste which he has seen in her at other times. Her usual costume is both pretty and quiet, and the fashionable waistcoat and jacket (which are a spectacle in all the "Ladies' Companions" of the day) make the only approach to masculine *wearings* to be observed in her. She has great nicety and refinement in her personal ways, I think, and the cigarette is really a feminine weapon if properly understood. Ah, but I didn't see her smoke. I was unfortunate. I could only go with Robert three times to her house, and once she was out. He was really very good and kind to let me go at all, after he found the sort of society rampant around her. He didn't like it extremely, but, being the prince of husbands, he was lenient to my desires and yielded the point. She seems to live in the abomination of desolation, as far as regards society—crowds of ill-bred men who adore her *à genoux bas,* betwixt a puff of smoke and an ejection of saliva. Society of the ragged Red diluted with the lower theatrical. She herself so different, so apart, as alone in her melancholy

disdain! I was deeply interested in that poor woman, I felt a profound compassion for her. I did not mind much the Greek in Greek costume who tutoyéd her, and kissed her, I believe, so Robert said; or the other vulgar man of the theatre who went down on his knees and called her "sublime." "Caprice d'amitié," said she, with her quiet, gentle scorn. A noble woman under the mud, be certain. *I* would kneel down to her, too, if she would leave it all, throw it off, and be herself as God made her. But she would not care for my kneeling; she does not care for me. Perhaps she doesn't care for anybody by this time—who knows? She wrote one, or two, or three kind notes to me, and promised to "venir m'embrasser" before she left Paris; but she did not come. We both tried hard to please her, and she told a friend of ours that she "liked us"; only we always felt that we couldn't penetrate—couldn't really *touch* her—it was all vain. Her play failed, though full of talent. It didn't draw, and was withdrawn accordingly. I wish she would keep to her romances, in which her real power lies. . . .

Alfred De Musset was to have been at M. Buloz's, where Robert was a week ago, on purpose to meet him, but he was prevented in some way. His brother, Paul De Musset, a very different person, was there instead—but we hope to have Alfred on another occasion. Do you know his poems? He is not capable of large grasps, but he has poet's life and blood in him, I assure you. He is said to be at the feet of Rachel just now, and a man may nearly as well be with a tigress in a cage. He began with the Princess Belgiojoso—followed George Sand—Rachel finishes, is likely to finish in every sense. In the intervals he plays at chess. There's the anatomy of a *man!*

We are expecting a visit from Lamartine, who does a great deal of honour to both of us, it appears, in the way of appreciation, and is kind enough to propose to come. I will tell you all about it.

But now tell *me.* Oh, I want so to hear how you are. Better, stronger, I hope and trust. How does the new house and garden look in the spring? Prettier and prettier, I dare say. . . .

The dotation of the President is enormous certainly, and I wish for his own sake it had been rather more

moderate. Now I must end here. Post hour strikes. God bless you.

Do love me as much as you can, always, and think how I am your ever affectionate

Ba.

Our darling is well; thank God.

[Æt. 35]

EDWARD LEAR

1812–1888

To Chichester Fortescue

[life in rome]

107 2do Via Felici, Roma,
Feby. 12, 1848.

Your letter of Oct. 25th 1847, ought to have been answered before now, & I have been going to do so ever since I had it, but I have said to myself "what's the use of writing to-day when you haven't 20 minutes—or to-day when you've got the toothache, or to-day when you are so cross? Fortescue won't thank you for a stupid letter, particularly as his was so very amusing, so you'd better wait you had. And so I have till I'm ashamed of the delay and therefore I'll send off note 18th be the letter of what degree of badness it may. First glancing over your bi-sheeted epistle—thank you for your introduction to Baring: he is an extremely luminous & amiable brick, and I like him very much, & I suppose he likes me or he wouldn't take the trouble of knocking me up as he does, considering the lot of people he might take to instead. We have been out once or twice in the Campagna, and go to Mrs. Sartoris, or other evening popular approximations together. He would draw; very well, and indeed does, but has little practice. Altogether he is one of the best specimens of young English here this winter, tho' there is a tolerably good sprinkling of elect & *rational* beings too. In fact it is a propitious season, the rumours of distraction prevented a many nasty vulgar people from coming, and there is really room to move. Among families, Greys, Herberts, Clives stand promiscuous; of young ladies, Miss W. Horton, & Miss Lindsay are first to my

taste, & of married ones, Mrs. G. Herbert & Mrs. Clive,—then Lady W. is admired though by me not: she is so like a wren, I'm sure she must turn into a wren when she dies. The variety of foreign society is delightful, particularly with long names: *e.g.*, Madame *Pul-itz-neck-off*—and Count Bigenouff;—Baron Polysuky, & Mons. Pig:—I never heard such a list. I am afraid to stand near a door, lest the announced names should make me grin.—Then there is a Lady Mary Ross, and a most gigantic daughter—whom Italians wittily call "the great Ross-child," and her mama, "Rosso-antico." . . . I miss the Gordon's and my old kind friend Lady S. Percy sadly, & somehow the 6 & 30-ness of my sentiments and constitution make me rather graver than of old:—also, the uncertainty of matters here and everywhere, and my own unfixedness of plans, conspire to make me more unstable & ass-like than usual. . . .

And now regarding yourself, I heard all about your Greek tour with interest, and that you were returned *to* England and *for* Louth, as you will have found by a disgusting little letter I sent you at the end of last October. The most important part of your letter seems to me that which gives me news of your being so rich a man:—I can only say I am sincerely glad of it, and I don't flatter you when I say I believe you will make as good a use of your money as anybody. I long to know how you like your new parliamentary life:—(Do you know a friend of mine, Bonham Carter M.P. for Winchester? This reminds me of "Have you been in India?" "Yes." "O then do you know my friend Mr. Jones?") So pray let me hear from you. . . .

Now I am at the end of replying to your letter, and a very jolly one it is. So I must e'en turn over another stone as the sandpiper said when he was alooking for vermicules. You ask what I am about; making of little paintings, one for Ld. Canning etc. etc., and one of a bigger growth for Ld. Ward, but I am in a disturbidous state along of my being undecided as to how I shall go on with art, knowing that figure drawing is that which I know least of & yet is the "crown and roof of things." I have a plan of going to Bowen at Corfù and thence Archipelago or Greeceward, (Greece however is in a very

untravellable state just now) should the state of Italy prevent my remaining in it for the summer. But whether I stop here to draw figure, or whether I go to Apulia & Calabria, or whether I Archipelago (V. A. Archipelago, P. Archipelawent, P. P. Archipelagone) or whatever I do, I strongly long to go to Egypt for the next winter as ever is, if so be as I can find a sufficiency of tin to allow of my passing 4 or 5 months there. I am quite crazy about Memphis & On & Isis & crocodiles and ophthalmia & Nubians, and simooms & Sorcerers, & Sphingidœ. Seriously the contemplation of Egypt must fill the mind, the artistic mind I mean, with great food for the rumination of long years. I have a strong wish also to see Syria, & Asia Minor and all sorts of grisogorious places, but, but, who can tell? You see therefore in how noxious a state of knownothingatallaboutwhatoneisgoing-todo-ness I am in. Yet this is clear:—the days of possible Lotus-eating are diminishing, & by the time I am 40 I would fain be in England once more. . . .

But a truce to growling and reflections. I should have told you that Bowen has written to me in the kindest possible manner, asking me to go and stay with him at Corfù and I shall regret if I can't do so. I wish to goodness I was a polype and could cut myself in six bits. I wish you were downstairs in that little room.

[Æt. 54]

To Lady Waldegrave

["there is no such a person"]

15, Stratford Place, Oxford St., W.
17 October, 1866.

My dear Lady Waldegrave,—

It is orfle cold here, and I don't know what to do. I think I shall go to Jibberolter, passing through Spain, and doing Portigle later. After all one isn't a potato—to remain always in one place.

A few days ago in a railway as I went to my sister's a gentleman explained to two ladies, (whose children had my "Book of Nonsense,") that thousands of families were grateful to the author (which in silence I agreed to)

who was not generally known—but was really Lord Derby: and now came a showing forth, which cleared up at once to my mind why that statement has already appeared in several papers. Edward Earl of Derby (said the Gentleman) did not choose to publish the book openly, but dedicated it as you see to his relations, and now if you will transpose the letters L E A R you will read simply EDWARD EARL.—Says I, joining spontanious in the conversation—"That is quite a mistake: I have reason to know that Edward Lear the painter and author wrote and illustrated the whole book." "And I," says the Gentleman, says he—"have good reason to know, Sir, that you are wholly mistaken. *There is no such a person* as Edward Lear." "But," says I, "there *is*—and I am the man —and I wrote the book!" Whereon all the party burst out laughing and evidently thought me mad or telling fibs. So I took off my hat and showed it all round, with Edward Lear and the address in large letters—also one of my cards, and a marked handkerchief: on which amazement devoured those benighted individuals and I left them to gnash their teeth in trouble and tumult.

Believe me, Dear Lady Waldegrave,
Yours sincerely,
EDWARD LEAR.

[Æt. 41] JOHN LOTHROP MOTLEY

1814–1877

To his Wife

[AN INN AT DOVER]

LONG'S HOTEL,
Thursday morning, October 18th, 1855.

My dearest Mary,—

I write these few lines merely to tell you that I arrived *sain et sauf* in London yesterday forenoon at half-past ten. I crossed the Channel at three. The weather was very good, and the sea very smooth. The ladies on board were all desperately sea-sick, much to my astonishment, such demonstrations being entirely unauthorised by any of the circumstances. I stopped at Dover for the night,

finding it very ridiculous to hurry up to London at midnight, as everybody in that metropolis was likely to get on very well without me till the following morning. The inn, the "Lord Warden Hotel," is one of the best in England. My washing-stand in itself was enough to inspire one with veneration for the whole British nation; two great water jugs as big as those in the "Marriage of Cana," by Paolo Veronese, a wash basin big enough to swim in, celestial slop jars, heaps of clean towels, etc., and more water than was ever seen in one place in Paris, except in the Écoles de Natation, all made one feel very comfortable. A Frenchman would have been wretched, however, for there were not two clocks or even four mirrors in the chamber, but I solaced myself with the remembrance of the splendour I had left in Paris, and with the potentiality of being clean a few brief days in England. I am sorry, however, to say that I am not as well off here. I have a good enough bachelor chamber, but it looks like a hospital for invalided or incurable furniture. The bed is as wide as Oxford Street; it is also quite as hard, the mattresses being evidently stuffed with paving stones from that classic and stony-hearted step-mother.* I stopped at Chapman's on my way up from the railroad, so commenced business sooner than if I had not slept at Dover, filled up the form of application for the copyright, and in short did all that was necessary before coming to Long's. We have decided of course to defer actual publication† till the other (American edition) is ready. . . .

Ever your own
J. L. M.

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* "Oxford street, stony-hearted stepmother"—De Quincey's *Confessions of an English Opium-Eater.*

†*The Rise of the Dutch Republic.*

[Æt. 44]

To his Wife

[THACKERAY AT FORTY-SIX]

London,
May 28th, 1858.

My dearest Mary,—

. . . In the evening I dined at Mackintosh's. The party consisted of the Sturgis's, a Mrs. ——, of whom I know nothing, except that Thackeray kept saying, as I learned afterwards, all dinner-time to Sturgis, "I hate that woman!"—why she was so odious I have not yet been informed, as she seemed as harmless as a dove if not as wise as a serpent. The others were Thackeray, Lord Carlisle, and myself. I believe you have never seen Thackeray. He has the appearance of a colossal infant, smooth, white, shiny ringlety hair, flaxen, alas, with advancing years, a roundish face, with a little dab of a nose upon which it is a perpetual wonder how he keeps his spectacles, a sweet but rather piping voice, with something of the childish treble about it, and a very tall, slightly stooping figure—such are the characteristics of the great "snob" of England. His manner is like that of everybody else in England — nothing original, all planed down into perfect uniformity with that of his fellow-creatures. There was not much more distinction in his talk than in his white choker or black coat and waistcoat. As you like detail, however, I shall endeavour to Boswellise him a little, but it is very hard work. Something was said of Carlyle the author. Thackeray said, "Carlyle hates everybody that has arrived—if they are on the road, he may perhaps treat them civilly." Mackintosh praised the description in the "French Revolution" of the flight of the King and Queen (which is certainly one of the most living pictures ever painted with ink), and Thackeray agreed with him, and spoke of the passages very heartily. Of the Cosmopolitan Club, Thackeray said, "Everybody is or is supposed to be a celebrity; nobody ever says anything worth hearing and every one goes there with his white choker at midnight, to appear as if he had just been dining with the aristocracy. I have no doubt," he added, "that half of us put on the

white cravat after a solitary dinner at home or at our club, and so go down among the Cosmopolitans." . . .

Your affectionate
J. L. M.

[Æt. 44]

To his Wife

[DINING WITH MACAULAY AT THE MACKINTOSHES']

London,
May 30th, 1858.

My dearest Mary,—

On Monday I dined with the Mackintoshes. Macaulay, Dean Milman, and Mr. and Mrs. Farrar composed the party. Of course you would like a photograph of Macaulay, as faithfully as I can give it. He impressed me on the whole agreeably. To me, personally, he spoke courteously, respectfully, showed by allusion to the subject in various ways that he was quite aware of my book and its subject, although I doubt whether he had read it. He may have done so, but he manifested no special interest in me. I believe that he is troubled about his health* (having a kind of bronchial or asthmatic cough), and that he rarely dines out now-a-days, so that it is perhaps a good deal of a compliment that he came on this occasion on purpose to meet me. His general appearance is singularly commonplace. I cannot describe him better than by saying he has exactly that kind of face and figure which by no possibility would be selected, out of even a very small number of persons, as those of a remarkable personage. He is of the middle height, neither above nor below it. The outline of his face in profile is rather good. The nose, very slightly aquiline, is well cut, and the expression of the mouth and chin agreeable. His hair is thin and silvery, and he looks a good deal older than many men of his years—for, if I am not mistaken, he is just as old as his century, like Cromwell, Balzac, Charles V., and other notorious individuals. Now those two impostors, so far as appearances go, Prescott and Mignet, who are sixty-two, look young enough, in comparison, to be Macaulay's sons. The face, to resume my description, seen in front, is blank, and as it were

* Macaulay died in December of the next year.

badly lighted. There is nothing luminous in the eye, nothing impressive in the brow. The forehead is spacious, but it is scooped entirely away in the region where benevolence ought to be, while beyond rise reverence, firmness and self-esteem, like Alps on Alps. The under eyelids are so swollen as almost to close the eyes, and it would be quite impossible to tell the colour of those orbs, and equally so, from the neutral tint of his hair and face, to say of what complexion he had originally been. His voice is agreeable, and its intonations delightful, although that is so common a gift with Englishmen as to be almost a national characteristic.

As usual, he took up the ribands of the conversation, and kept them in his own hand, driving wherever it suited him. I believe he is thought by many people a bore, and you remember that Sydney Smith spoke of him as "our Tom, the greatest engine of social oppression in England." I should think he might be to those who wanted to talk also. I can imagine no better fun than to have Carlyle and himself meet accidentally at the same dinner-table with a small company. It would be like two locomotives, each with a long train, coming against each other at express speed. Both, I have no doubt, could be smashed into silence at the first collision. Macaulay, however, is not so dogmatic, or so outrageously absurd as Carlyle often is, neither is he half so grotesque or amusing. His whole manner has the smoothness and polished surface of the man of the world, the politician, and the new peer, spread over the man of letters within. I do not know that I can repeat any of his conversation, for there was nothing to excite very particular attention in its even flow. There was not a touch of Holmes's ever bubbling wit, imagination, enthusiasm, and arabesqueness. It is the perfection of the commonplace, without sparkle or flash, but at the same time always interesting and agreeable. I could listen to him with pleasure for an hour or two every day, and I have no doubt I should thence grow wiser every day, for his brain is full, as hardly any man's ever was, and his way of delivering himself is easy and fluent. . . .

Yours most affectionately,

J. L. M.

[Æt. 23] CHARLOTTE BRONTË

1816–1855

To Ellen Nussey

[A curate proposes]

August 4th, 1839.

My dearest Ellen,—

The Liverpool journey is yet a matter of talk, a sort of castle in the air; but, between you and me, I fancy it is very doubtful whether it will ever assume a more solid shape. Aunt, like many other elderly people, likes to talk of such things; but when it comes to putting them into practice, she rather falls off. Such being the case, I think you and I had better adhere to our first plan of going somewhere together, independently of other people. I have got leave to accompany you for a week,—at the utmost stretch a fortnight. Where do you wish to go? Burlington, I should think from what Mary Taylor says, would be as eligible a place as any. When do you wish to set off? Arrange all these things according to your own convenience; I shall start no objections. The idea of seeing the *sea*—of being near it—watching its changes by sunrise, sunset, moonlight, and noonday—in calm, perhaps in storm—fills and satisfies my mind. I shall be discontented at nothing. And then I am not to be with a set of people with whom I have nothing in common,—who would be nuisances and bores; but with you, Ellen Nussey, whom I like, and who know and like me. I have an odd circumstance to relate to you—prepare for a hearty laugh! The other day Mr. Hodgson, papa's former curate, now a vicar, came over to spend the day with us, bringing with him his own curate. The latter gentleman, by name, Mr. Bryce, is a young Irish clergyman, fresh from Dublin University. It was the first time we had any of us seen him, but however, after the manner of his countrymen, he soon made himself at home. His character quickly appeared in his conversation: witty, lively, ardent, clever too, but deficient in the dignity and discretion of an Englishman. At home, you know, Ellen, I talk with ease, and am never shy, never weighed down and oppressed by that miserable *mauvaise honte* which torments and constrains me elsewhere. So

I conversed with this Irishman and laughed at his jests, and though I saw faults in his character, excused them because of the amusement his originality afforded. I cooled a little, indeed, and drew in towards the latter part of the evening, because he began to season his conversation with something of Hibernian flattery, which I did not quite relish. However, they went away, and no more was thought about them. A few days after I got a letter, the direction of which puzzled me, it being in a hand I was not accustomed to see. Evidently, it was neither from you nor Mary Taylor, my only correspondents. Having opened and read it, it proved to be a declaration of attachment and proposal of matrimony, expressed in the ardent language of the sapient young Irishman! Well! thought I, I have heard of love at first sight, but this beats all. I leave you to guess what my answer would be, convinced that you will not do me the injustice of guessing wrong. When we meet I'll show you the letter. I hope you are laughing heartily. This is not like one of my adventures, is it? It more resembles Martha Taylor's. I am certainly doomed to be an old maid. Never mind, I made up my mind to that fate ever since I was twelve years old. Write soon.

C. Brontë.

[Æt. 32]

To Ellen Nussey

[DARK DAYS]

October 9th, '48.

My dear Ellen,—

I should have written to you ere now had I been sure of your address, but I thought by this you had probably left Rye, as you talked of being in London soon. The past three weeks have been a dark interval in our humble home. Branwell's constitution has been failing fast all the summer; but still, neither the doctors nor himself thought him so near his end as he was. He was entirely confined to his bed for but one single day, and was in the village two days before his death. He died, after twenty minutes' struggle, on Sunday morning, September 24th. He was perfectly conscious till the last agony came on. His mind had undergone the peculiar

change which frequently precedes death, two days previously; the calm of better feelings filled it; a return of natural affection marked his last moments. He is in God's hands now; and the All-powerful is likewise the All-merciful. A deep conviction that he rests at last—rests well after his brief, erring, suffering, feverish life, fills and quiets my mind now. The final separation, the spectacle of his pale corpse, gave more acute, bitter pain than I could have imagined. Till the last hour comes, we never know how much we can forgive, pity, regret a near relation. All his vices were and are nothing now. We remember only his woes. Papa was acutely distressed at first, but, on the whole, has borne the event well. Emily and Anne are pretty well, though Anne is always delicate, and Emily has a cold and cough at present. It was my fate to sink at the crisis, when I should have collected my strength. Headache and sickness came on first on the Sunday; I could not regain my appetite. Then internal pain attacked me. I became at once much reduced. It was impossible to eat a morsel. At last, bilious fever declared itself. I was confined to bed a week — a dreary week, but, thank God! health seems now returning. I can sit up all day, and take moderate nourishment. The doctor said at first I should be very slow in recovering, but I seem to get on faster than he anticipated. I am ordered to be scrupulously careful about diet, etc., and I try to be obedient to directions.

I shall be very glad to hear from you again, dear Ellen; it is true enough that your letters interest me; there is no mistake there. I feel that I do not write to you enough in detail, but I cannot help it; forgive me that shortcoming as you have forgiven me many others.

Yours faithfully,

C. Brontë.

P.S.—You are to understand that my bilious fever is quite gone now and that I am truly *much better.*

[Æt. 35]

To George Smith

["HENRY ESMOND"; THACKERAY'S "CRUEL KNIFE"]

February 14th, 1852.

My dear Sir,—

It has been a great delight to me to read Mr. Thackeray's work; and I now so seldom express my sense of kindness that, for once, you must permit me, without rebuke, to thank you for a pleasure so rare and special. Yet I am not going to praise either Mr. Thackeray or his book. I have read, enjoyed, been interested, and, after all, feel full as much ire and sorrow as gratitude and admiration. And still one can never lay down a book of his without the last two feelings having their part, be the subject of treatment what it may. In the first half of the book what chiefly struck me was the wonderful manner in which the writer throws himself into the spirit and letters of the times of which he treats; the allusions, the illustrations, the style, all seem to me so masterly in their exact keeping, their harmonious consistency, their nice, natural truth, their pure exemption from exaggeration. No second-rate imitator can write in that way; no coarse scene-painter can charm us with an allusion so delicate and perfect. But what bitter satire, what relentless dissection of diseased subjects! Well, and this, too, is right, or would be right, if the savage surgeon did not seem so fiercely pleased with his work. Thackeray likes to dissect an ulcer or an aneurism; he has pleasure in putting his cruel knife or probe into quivering living flesh. Thackeray would not like all the world to be good; no great satirist would like society to be perfect.

As usual, he is unjust to women, quite unjust. There is hardly any punishment he does not deserve for making Lady Castlewood peep through a keyhole, listen at a door, and be jealous of a boy and a milkmaid. Many other things I noticed that, for my part, grieved and exasperated me as I read; but then, again, came passages so true, so deeply thought, so tenderly felt, one could not help forgiving and admiring. . . .

But I wish he could be told not to care much for dwell-

ing on the political or religious intrigues of the times. Thackeray, in his heart, does not value political or religious intrigues of any age or date. He likes to show us human nature at home, as he himself daily sees it; his wonderful observant faculty likes to be in action. In him this faculty is a sort of captain and leader; and if ever any passage in his writings lacks interest, it is when this master-faculty is for a time thrust into a subordinate position. I think such is the case in the former half of the present volume. Towards the middle he throws off restraint, becomes himself, and is strong to the close. Everything now depends on the second and third volumes. If, in pith and interest, they fall short of the first, a true success cannot ensue. If the continuation be an improvement upon the commencement, if the stream gathers force as it rolls, Thackeray will triumph. Some people have been in the habit of terming him the second writer of the day; it just depends on himself whether or not these critics shall be justified in their award. He need not be the second. God made him second to no man. If I were he, I would show myself as I am, not as critics report me; at any rate I would do my best. Mr. Thackeray is easy and indolent, and seldom cares to do his best. Thank you once more; and believe me yours sincerely,

C. Brontë.

[Æt. 25] HENRY DAVID THOREAU

1817–1862

To his Father and Mother

["I do not like their cities"]

Castleton, Staten Island, May 11, 1843.

Dear Mother and Friends at Home,—

We arrived here safely at ten o'clock on Sunday morning, having had as good passage as usual, though we ran aground and were detained a couple of hours in the Thames River, till the tide came to our relief. At length we curtseyed up to a wharf just the other side of their Castle Garden,—very incurious about them and their city. I believe my vacant looks, absolutely inaccessible

to questions, did at length satisfy an army of starving cabmen that I did not want a hack, cab, or anything of that sort as yet. It was the only demand the city made on us; as if a wheeled vehicle of some sort were the sum and summit of a reasonable man's wants. "Having tried the water," they seemed to say, "will you not return to the pleasant securities of land carriage? Else why your boat's prow turned toward the shore at last?" They are a sad-looking set of fellows, not permitted to come on board, and I pitied them. They had been expecting me, it would seem, and did really wish that I should take a cab; though they did not seem rich enough to supply me with one.

It was a confused jumble of heads and soiled coats, dangling from flesh-colored faces,—all swaying to and fro, as by a sort of undertow, while each whipstick, true as the needle to the pole, still preserved that level and direction in which its proprietor had dismissed his forlorn interrogatory. They took sight from them,—the lash being wound up thereon, to prevent your attention from wandering, or to make it concentre upon its object by the spiral line. They began at first, perhaps, with the modest, but rather confident inquiry, "Want a cab, sir?" but as their despair increased, it took the affirmative tone, as the disheartened and irresolute are apt to do: "You want a cab, sir," or even, "You want a nice cab, sir, to take you to Fourth Street." The question which one had bravely and hopefully begun to put, another had the tact to take up and conclude with fresh emphasis,—twirling it from his particular whipstick as if it had emanated from his lips—as the sentiment did from his heart. Each one could truly say, "Them's my sentiments." But it was a sad sight.

I am seven and a half miles from New York, and, as it would take half a day at least, have not been there yet. I have already run over no small part of the island, to the highest hill, and some way along the shore. From the hill directly behind the house I can see New York, Brooklyn, Long Island, the Narrows, through which vessels bound to and from all parts of the world chiefly pass, —Sandy Hook and the Highlands of Neversink (part of the coast of New Jersey)—and, by going still farther up

the hill, the Kill van Kull, and Newark Bay. From the pinnacle of one Madame Grimes' house, the other night at sunset, I could see almost round the island. Far in the horizon there was a fleet of sloops bound up the Hudson, which seemed to be going over the edge of the earth; and in view of these trading ships, commerce seems quite imposing.

But it is rather derogatory that your dwelling-place should be only a neighborhood to a great city,—to live on an inclined plane. I do not like their cities and forts, with their morning and evening guns, and sails flapping in one's eye. I want a whole continent to breathe in, and a good deal of solitude and silence, such as all Wall Street cannot buy,—nor Broadway with its wooden pavement. I must live along the beach, on the southern shore, which looks directly out to sea,—and see what that great parade of water means, that dashes and roars, and has not yet wet me, as long as I have lived.

I must not know anything about my condition and relations here till what is not permanent is worn off. I have not yet subsided. Give me time enough, and I may like it. All my inner man heretofore has been a Concord impression; and here come these Sandy Hook and Coney Island breakers to meet and modify the former; but it will be long before I can make nature look as innocently grand and inspiring as in Concord.

Your affectionate son,
HENRY D. THOREAU.

[Æt. 33]

To RALPH WALDO EMERSON
[MARGARET FULLER'S DEATH]

FIRE ISLAND BEACH,
Thursday morning, July 25, 1850.

Dear Friend,—

I am writing this at the house of Smith Oakes, within one mile of the wreck.* He is the one who rendered most assistance. William H. Channing came down with me, but I have not seen Arthur Fuller, nor Greeley, nor Marcus Spring. Spring and Charles Sumner were here yes-

* Of the barque *Elizabeth*.

terday, but left soon. Mr. Oakes and wife tell me (all the survivors came, or were brought, directly to their house) that the ship struck at ten minutes after four A.M., and all hands, being mostly in their nightclothes, made haste to the forecastle, the water coming in at once. There they remained; the passengers *in* the forecastle, the crew above it, doing what they could. Every wave lifted the forecastle roof and washed over those within. The first man got ashore at nine; many from nine to noon. At flood tide, about half past three o'clock, when the ship broke up entirely, they came out of the forecastle, and Margaret sat with her back to the foremast, with her hands on her knees, her husband and child already drowned. A great wave came and washed her aft. The steward (?) had just before taken her child and started for shore. Both were drowned.

The broken desk, in a bag, containing no very valuable papers; a large black leather trunk, with an upper and under compartment, the upper holding books and papers; a carpet-bag, probably Ossoli's, and one of his shoes (?) are all the Ossoli effects known to have been found. Four bodies remain to be found: the two Ossolis, Horace Sumner, and a sailor. I have visited the child's grave. Its body will probably be taken away to-day. The wreck is to be sold at auction, excepting the hull, to-day.

The mortar would not go off. Mrs. Hasty, the captain's wife, told Mrs. Oakes that she and Margaret divided their money, and tied up the halves in handkerchiefs around their persons; that Margaret took sixty or seventy dollars. Mrs. Hasty, who can tell all about Margaret up to eleven o'clock on Friday, is said to be going to Portland, New England, to-day. She and Mrs. Fuller must, and probably will, come together. The cook, the last to leave, and the steward (?) will know the rest. I shall try to see them. In the mean while I shall do what I can to recover property and obtain particulars hereabouts. William H. Channing — did I write it? — has come with me. Arthur Fuller has this moment reached the house. He reached the beach last night. We got here yesterday noon. A good part of the wreck still holds together where she struck, and something may come ashore with her fragments. The last body was found on

Tuesday, three miles west. Mrs. Oakes dried the papers which were in the trunk, and she says they appeared to be of various kinds. "Would they cover that table?" (a small round one). "They would if spread out. Some were tied up. There were twenty or thirty books in the same half of the trunk. Another smaller trunk, empty, came ashore, but there was no mark on it." She speaks of Paulina as if she might have been a sort of nurse to the child. I expect to go to Patchogue, whence the pilferers must have chiefly come, and advertise, etc.

[Æt. 46]

JAMES T. FIELDS

1817–1881

To Henry W. Longfellow *

["among the serenities"]

Campton Village,
June 19, 1864.

My dear Longfellow,—

We are here among the serenities and the fresh eggs. Would that you were near, to feel with us the wonderful beauty of the hills! Do come, and go over the Willy acres, and drive down into the comforting valleys by the lovely river, and eat wild strawberries, and rattle over the hills in our old wagon. In one week of this life I have grown as rusty as an old nail. I have lost all care; and the bundles of business have dropped clean off my shoulders and gone into the Pemigewasset. All the *buzziness* here is done by the bees; and the only active people are the birds, who sing all day long about our old dwelling by the roadside. Such a careless, good-for-nothing peaceful old life as this is well worth trying. A great and glorious laziness creeps up and takes possession of you the moment you arrive, and never lets go its hold as long as you stay. You loaf about in dell and hollow, and lie down on the hillside and let the slugs crawl over you without a shake. In the "broad orchards resonant with bees" you go to sleep, and only wake up

* For Longfellow's answer, see p. 278.

when the horn blows for dinner. We know nothing of the weather in these parts.

> "It may blow North, it still is warm,
> Or South, it still is clear;
> Or East, it smells like a clover farm,
> Or West, no thunder fear."

Will you not come? . . .

I hope "Palingenesis" will be well launched when the July Atlantic is ready. I left directions to have it properly put in the papers, but I have small faith in editors when I am out of the way. I am sure nothing finer has been printed for years.

> "Suns rise and set in Saadi's speech."

My wife sends kindest regards and hopes you will make your way to our roadside perch in New Hampshire.

Yours ever,
J. T. F.

[Æt. 34] JOHN RUSKIN
1819–1900

To Mary Russell Mitford

["WILD STORM-CLOUDS"; THE LAKE COUNTRY AND THE ALPS]

Keswick, Cumberland,
Good Friday, 1853.

My dear Miss Mitford,—

The pain of deep self-reproach was mixed with the delight which your letter gave me yesterday. Two months back I was each day on the point of writing to you to ask for your sympathy—the kindest and keenest sympathy that, I think, ever filled the breadth and depth of an unselfish heart. But my purpose was variously stayed, chiefly, as I remember, by the events on the Continent, fraught to me with very deep disappointment, and casting me into a depression and fever of spirit which, joined with some other circumstances nearer home, have, until now that I am resting with my kind wife among these quiet hills, denied me the heart to write cheerfully to those very dear friends to whom I would fain never write sadly. And now your letter comes with all its sweetness

and all its sting. My very dear lady, believe me, I am deeply gratified for your goodness, in a state of wonderment at its continuance to me—cold and unthankful as I have seemed—and I earnestly hope that in future it may not so frequently have to take the form of forgiveness, nor my sense of it that of remorse.

Nor did I shrink more from the silent blame than from the painful news of your letter, though I conjecture that your escape, though narrow, was complete—you say nothing of any hurt received. I hate ponies and everything four-legged, except an ass-colt and an arm-chair. But you are better and the spring is come, and I hope, for I am sure you will allow me, to bring my young wife to be rejoiced (under the shadow of her new and grievous lot) by your kind comforting. But pray keep her out of your garden, or she will certainly lose her wits with pure delight, or perhaps insist on staying with you and letting me find my way through the world by myself: a task which I should not *now* like to undertake. I should be very, very happy just now but for these wild storm-clouds bursting on my dear Italy and my fair France, my occupation gone, and all my earthly treasures (except the one I have just acquired and the everlasting Alps) perilled amidst the "tumult of the people," the "imagining of vain things." Ah, my dear Miss Mitford, see what your favorite "Bérangers" and "Gerald Griffins" do! But these are thoughts as selfish as they are narrow. I begin to feel that all the work I have been doing, and all the loves I have been cherishing, are ineffective and frivolous; that these are not times for watching clouds or dreaming over quiet waters, that more serious work is to be done, and that the time for endurance has come rather than for meditation, and for hope rather than for happiness. Happy those whose hope, without this severe and tearful rending-away of all the props and stability of earthly enjoyments, has been fixed "where the wicked cease from troubling." Mine was not; it was based on "those pillars of the earth" which are "astonished at His reproof."

I have, however, passed this week very happily here. We have a good clergyman, Mr. Myers, and I am recovering trust and tranquillity, though I had been wiser to

have come to your fair English pastures and flowering meadows, rather than to these moorlands, for they make me feel too painfully the splendor, not to be in any wise resembled or replaced, of those mighty scenes which I can reach no more—at least for a time. I am thinking, however, of a tour among our English abbeys—a feature which our country possesses of peculiar loveliness. As for our mountains or lakes, it is in vain that they are defended for their finish or their prettiness. The people who admire them after Switzerland do not understand Switzerland—even Wordsworth does not. Our mountains are mere bogs and lumps of spongy moorland, and our lakes are little swampy fish-ponds. It is curious I can take more pleasure in the chalk downs of Sussex, which pretend to nothing, than in these would-be hills, and I believe I shall have more pleasure in your pretty lowland scenery and richly painted gardens than in all the pseudo-sublime of the barren Highlands, except Killiecrankie. I went and knelt beside the stone that marks the spot of Claver's death-wound and prayed for more such spirits—we need them now.

My wife begs me to return her sincere thanks for your kind message, and to express to you the delight with which she looks forward to being presented to you—remembering what I told her among some of my first pleadings with her, that, whatever faults she might discover in her husband, he could at least promise her friends, whom she would have every cause to love and to honor. She needs them, but I think also deserves them.

Ever, my dear Miss Mitford, believe me,

Faithfully and affectionately yours,

J. Ruskin.

To C. F. Briggs

["elmwood junior"; "dr. primrose"]

Elmwood, Sept. 18, 1844.

My dear Friend,—

. . . I have inherited from my father an intellectual temperament which would fain keep its hands soft. I feel the sorrows of my friends and their joys with as much intensity as human nature is capable of, but I too often remain satisfied with the feeling. Partly from constitutional indolence and partly from timidity, I sit in the corner with my heart full and let others speak and act. But, with God's help, I am resolved to conquer this. I am too ready to leave things undone, because I am never satisfied with my manner of doing them. . . .

You speak of our marriage as one of "convenience," by which I suppose you mean that our means are such as to warrant us in being married at any time. This is not the case. My *Pioneer** debts will not be paid before January. . . . My father would have assisted me greatly, but he lost a great part of his own property a few years ago, and his income will hardly keep pace with his generosity. You will be glad to hear, however, that he has offered, without any hint on my part, to build me a cottage on a piece of his land here, if it can be done for a thousand dollars or thereabout. I think that I can put up quite a comfortable little nest for that sum, with a spare chamber for you and your wife whenever you may be able to pay us "provincials" a visit. . . . I have already christened my new castle (though as yet an atmospheric one) "Elmwood Junior," much to the delight of my father, who is one of the men you would like to know. He is Dr. Primrose in the comparative degree, the very simplest and charmingest of sexagenarians, and not without a great deal of the truest magnanimity. Nothing delights him so much as any compliment paid to me, except the idea of building me a cottage. If you could see him criticising the strut or crow of one of my chanti-

* A periodical which had failed.

cleers with a child's enthusiasm, or reading a review of my poems which he does not think laudatory enough (at the same time professing himself a disciple of Pope and pretending that he can't understand more than a tithe of what I write), or pointing out the advantages of the site he has selected for planting the Colony from Elmwood Senior, or talking of the efficacy of prayer, or praising "the old Federal Party with Washington at its head," or speaking of Jefferson as harshly as his kind heart will let him speak of anybody—in short, if you had a more than Asmodeus-faculty and could take the roof off his heart, you would fall in love with him. He has had far more sorrow, too, than most men, and his wounds have been in his tenderest part . . . but nothing could shake my beloved and honored father's trust in God and his sincere piety. . . .

Most affectionately your friend,
J. R. L.

[Æt. 26]

To C. F. Briggs
[his daughter]

Wednesday, Feb. 4, 1846.

My dear Friend,—

You must count this as two distinct letters, and give me credit accordingly. To tell the truth, I am very much taken up with the baby at present. It is true our enlarged means enable us to keep a maid, but I do not think Blanche safe in any one's arms but her mother's and mine, and Maria cannot bear the fatigue of "tending" her a great deal. I belong to a class of philosophers (unhappily, I believe, a small one) who do not believe that children are born into the world to subject their mothers to a diaper despotism, and to be brought down to their fathers after dinner, as an additional digestive to the nuts and raisins, to be bundled up and hurried away at the least symptom of disaffection or disturbed digestion. Unlike many philanthropists, I endeavor to put my principles into practice, and the result is that I find pretty steady employment and (to finish the quotations from the advertisements of serving-men's Elysian Fields) good wages. Blanche, already, with a perverted

taste, prefers her father to any one else, and considers me (as the antiquaries do whatever they can't explain in the old mythologies, whether it be male or female) as "the personification of the maternal principle." She is a very good child, however, and only cries enough to satisfy us, as the old Greek said, that we have begotten a mortal. The only portentous thing she ever does is to sneeze, and as it would be quite supererogatory in her to do this in order to procure a hearty "God bless you!" from all present, I incline to interpret it by Sir Thomas Browne's theory, who, in his exposure of vulgar errors, after pulling to pieces the notion that there is anything ominous in it, proceeds to inform us that it is an effort of nature to expel any *humor* that may lurk in the brain. If this be so, I should imagine, from Miss Fuller's attempts at facetiousness, which now and then give a melancholy air to the *Tribune,* that she must be an unparalleled sternutator. . . .

[Æt. 29]

To C. F. Briggs

[HIS "OLD GARRET"; "A FABLE FOR CRITICS"]

Elmwood, May 12, 1848.

My dear Friend,—

. . . Here I am in my garret. I slept here when I was a little curly-headed boy, and used to see visions between me and the ceiling, and dream the so often recurring dream of having the earth put into my hand like an orange. In it I used to be shut up without a lamp—my mother saying that none of her children should be afraid of the dark—to hide my head under the pillows, and then not be able to shut out the shapeless monsters that thronged around me, minted in my brain. It is a pleasant room, facing, from the position of the house, almost equally towards the morning and the afternoon. In winter I can see the sunset, in summer I can see it only as it lights up the tall trunks of the English elms in front of the house, making them sometimes, when the sky behind them is lead-colored, seem of the most brilliant yellow. When the sun, towards setting, breaks out sud-

denly after a thunder-shower and I see them against an almost black sky, they have seemed of a most peculiar and dazzling green tint, like the rust on copper. In winter my view is a wide one, taking in a part of Boston. I can see one long curve of the Charles, and the wide fields between me and Cambridge, and the flat marshes beyond the river, smooth and silent with glittering snow. As the spring advances and one after another of our trees puts forth, the landscape is cut off from me piece by piece, till, by the end of May, I am closeted in a cool and rustling privacy of leaves. Then I begin to bud with the season. Towards the close of winter I become thoroughly wearied of closed windows and fires. I feel dammed up, and yet there is not flow enough in me to gather any head of water. When I can sit at my open window and my friendly leaves hold their hands before my eyes to prevent their wandering to the landscape, I can sit down and write.

I have begun upon the "Fable" again fairly, and am making some headway. I think with what I sent you (which I believe was about 500 lines) it will make something over a thousand. I have done, since I sent the first half, Willis, Longfellow, Bryant, Miss Fuller, and Mrs. Child. In Longfellow's case I have attempted no characterization. The same (in a degree) may be said of S. M. F. With her I have been perfectly good-humored, but I have a fancy that what I say will stick uncomfortably. It will make you laugh, So will L. M. C. After S. M. F. I make a short digression on bores in general, which has some drollery in it. Willis I think good. Bryant is funny, and as fair as I could make it, immitigably just. Indeed I have endeavored to be so in all. I am glad I did Bryant before I got your letter. The only verses I shall add regarding him are some complimentary ones, which I left for a happier mood after I had written the comic part. *I* steal from him indeed! If he knew me he would not say so. When I steal I shall go to a specie-vault, not to a till. Does he think that he *invented* the Past and has a prescription title to it? Do not think I am provoked. I am simply amused. If he had *riled* me, I might have knocked him into a cocked hat in my satire. But that, on second

thought, would be no revenge, for it might make him President, a cocked hat being now the chief qualification. It would be more severe to knock him into the middle of next week, as that is in the future, and he has such a partiality towards the past. However, enough of him. My next volume will be enough revenge, for it will be better than my last. . . .

[Æt. 30]

To Charles R. Lowell *

["The importance of 'observing'"]

Elmwood, June 11, 1849.

My dear Charlie,—

I have had so much to do in the way of writing during the past week that I have not had time sooner to answer your letter, which came to me in due course of mail, and for which I am much obliged to you.

I am very glad to hear that you are enjoying yourself so much, and also that the poor musquash dug faster than you did. I was not so long ago a boy as not to remember what sincere satisfaction there is in a good ducking, and how the spirit of maritime adventure is ministered to by a raft which will not float. I congratulate you on both experiences.

And now let me assume the privilege of my uncleship to give you a little advice. Let me counsel you to make use of all your visits to the country as opportunities for an education which is of great importance, which town-bred boys are commonly lacking in, and which can never be so cheaply acquired as in boyhood. Remember that a man is valuable in our day for what he *knows*, and that his company will always be desired by others in exact proportion to the amount of intelligence and instruction he brings with him. I assure you that one of the earliest pieces of definite knowledge we acquire after we become men is this—that our company will be desired no longer than we honestly pay our proper share in the general reckoning of mutual entertainment. A man who knows more than another knows *incalculably* more, be sure of

* At the age of fourteen. Killed at the Battle of Cedar Creek, 1864.

that, and a person with eyes in his head cannot look even into a pigsty without learning something that will be useful to him at one time or another. Not that we should educate ourselves for the mere selfish sake of that advantage of superiority which it will give us. But knowledge is power in this noblest sense, that it enables us to *benefit* others and to pay our way honorably in life by being of *use*.

Now, when you are at school in Boston you are furnishing your brain with what can be obtained from books. You are training and enriching your intellect. While you are in the country you should remember that you are in the great school of the senses. Train your eyes and ears. Learn to know all the trees by their bark and leaves, by their general shape and manner of growth. Sometimes you can be able to say positively what a tree is *not* by simply examining the lichens on the bark, for you will find that particular varieties of lichen love particular trees. Learn also to know all the birds by sight, by their notes, by their manner of flying; all the animals by their general appearance and gait or the localities they frequent.

You would be ashamed not to know the name and use of every piece of furniture in the house, and we ought to be as familiar with every object in the world—which is only a larger kind of house. You recollect the pretty story of Pizarro and the Peruvian Inca: how the Inca asked one of the Spaniards to write the word *Dio* (God) upon his thumb-nail, and then, showing it to the rest, found only Pizarro unable to read it! Well, you will find as you grow older that this same name of God is written all over the world in little phenomena that occur under our eyes every moment, and I confess that I feel very much inclined to hang my head with Pizarro when I cannot translate these hieroglyphics into my own vernacular.

Now, I write all this to you, my dear Charlie, not in the least because it is considered proper for uncles to bore their nephews with musty moralities and advice; but I should be quite willing that you should think me a bore, if I could only be the means of impressing upon you the importance of *observing,* and the great fact that

we cannot properly observe till we have learned *how*. Education, practice, and especially a determination not to be satisfied with remarking that side of an object which happens to catch our eye first when we first see it—these gradually make an observer. The faculty, once acquired, becomes at length another sense which works mechanically.

I think I have sometimes noticed in you an *impatience* of mind which you should guard against carefully. Pin this maxim up in your memory—that Nature abhors the credit system, and that we never get anything in life till we have paid for it. Anything good, I mean; evil things we always pay for afterwards, and always when we find it hardest to do it. By paying for them, of course, I mean *laboring* for them. Tell me how much good solid *work* a young man has in him, and I will erect a horoscope for him as accurate as Guy Mannering's for young Bertram. Talents are absolutely nothing to a man except he have the faculty of work along with them. They, in fact, turn upon him and worry him, as Actæon's dogs did—these are the sails and the rudder even of genius, without which it is only a wretched hulk upon the waters.

It is not fair to look a gift horse in the mouth, unless, indeed, it be a wooden horse, like that which carried the Greeks into Troy; but my lecture on patience and *finish* was apropos of your letter, which was more careless in its chirography and (here and there) in its composition than I liked. Always make a thing as good as you can. Otherwise it was an excellent letter, because it told what you had seen and what you were doing—certainly better as a *letter* than this of mine, which is rather a sermon. But read it, my dear Charlie, as the advice of one who takes a sincere interest in you. I hope to hear from you again, and my answer to your next shall be more entertaining.

I remain your loving uncle,

J. R. Lowell.

[Æt. 33]

To Mrs. Francis G. Shaw

[LETTERS; THE SOULS OF HOUSES]

Elmwood, Jan. 11, 1853.

My dear Sarah,—

You know that I promised solemnly to write you a letter from Switzerland, and therefore, of course, I didn't do it. These epistolary promises to pay always do (or at least always ought to) come back protested. A letter ought always to be the genuine and natural flower of one's disposition—proper both to the writer and the season—and none of your turnip japonicas cut laboriously out of a cheap and flabby material. Then, when you have sealed it up, it comes out fresh and fragrant. I do not like shuttle-cock correspondences. What is the use of our loving people if they can't let us owe them a letter? if they can't be sure we keep on loving them if we don't keep sending an acknowledgment under our hands and seals once a month? As if there were a statute of limitations for affection! The moment Love begins to think of Duty, he may as well go hang himself with his own bow-string. All this means that if I should never write you another letter (which is extremely likely), and we should never meet again till I drop in upon you some day in another planet, I shall give an anxious look at myself in the mirror (while I am waiting for you to come down), and shall hear the flutter of your descending wings with the same admiring expectation as I should now listen for your foot upon the stairs. . . .

Now, the reason I am writing to you is this: I spent Sunday with Edmund Quincey at Dedham, and, as I came back over the rail yesterday, I was roused from a reverie by seeing "West Roxbury Station" written up over the door of a kind of Italian villa at which we stopped. I almost twisted my head off looking for the house on the hill. There it stood in mourning still, just as Frank painted it. The color suited my mood exactly. The eyes of the house were shut, the welcoming look it had was gone; it was dead. I am a Platonist about houses. They get to my eye a shape from the souls that inhabit them. My friends' dwellings seem as peculiar to

them as their bodies, looks, and motions. People have no right to sell their dead houses; they should burn them as they used to burn corpses. Suppose these bodies of ours could be reinhabited, and that our heirs could turn an honest penny (as American heirs certainly would) by disposing of them by auction. How could we endure to see Miss Amelia Augusta Smith's little soul giggling out of those sacred caves where we had been wont to catch glimpses of the shrinking Egeria of refined and noble womanhood? With what horror should we hear the voice that had thrilled us with song, startled us with ambushes of wit, or softened us with a sympathy that made us feel somehow as if our mother's tears were mixed with its tones—I say, with what horror should we hear it using all its pathos and all its melodious changes for the cheapening of a tarlatan muslin or the describing the dress that Eliza Ann wore at her wedding! I was too far off, thank God, to see Mrs. Smith looking out of your dead house's windows, but I mused of these things as the train rolled on, and caught fragments of the vapid talk of a couple on the seat before me. I have buried that house now and flung my pious handful of earth over it and set up a head-stone—and I shall never look up to the hill-top again, let me pass it never so often. But I resolved to write a letter to its departed spirit.

. . . It is hard writing at such a distance. If one be in good spirits, and write a nice, pleasant, silly letter, it may find those to whom it goes on the other side of the world in the midst of a new sorrow, and will be as welcome as a half-tipsy wedding guest at a funeral. The thing which everybody here is talking about is the Tippers. The Rappers are considered quite *slow* nowadays. Tables speak as inspired, consolatory nothings are literally delivered *ex cathedrâ*. Bores whom we thought buried out of the way long ago revive in washstands and bedsteads. Departed spirits still rule us—but no longer metaphorically from their urns—they speak to us through the excited centre-table. I have heard of a particular teapoy that was vehement, slowly argumentative, blandly sympathetic, wildly romantic, and all with its legs alone. Little did John Chinaman dream what he was making, as little as John Shakespeare knew that he had begotten

the world's wonder William. A neighbor of ours has an exhorting boot-jack, and I expect every day to hear of the spirit of Diogenes in a wash-tub. Judge Wells (*Aunt* Wells, as he is affectionately called by the Bar) is such a powerful *medium* that he has to drive back the furniture from following him when he goes out, as one might a pack of too-affectionate dogs. I have no doubt I shall meet him some day with a footstool gambolling at his side or leaping up on his reluctant legs. . . .

[Æt. 35]

To Miss Norton

[BEVERLY A NEW ENGLAND SORRENTO]

[BEVERLY], SHIP "UNDERHILL," ELDREDGE, MISTRESS,
Lat. 40° 20′, Long. (bad observation),
Islands of Sirens bearing E. S. E. 2½ miles.

August 14, 1854.

. . . If I may trust a rather poor memory—without a book to make a crutch of—I ought to thank you for having given me so happy an example of the force of habit. Some four thousand years ago the fountain of Arethusa went down near Eleusis (?) and came up at Syracuse in Sicily, and now, translated to America and tolerably well bound, it has contrived to do the same thing between Shady Hill and Newport. I am quite content. I could not have a better minister resident, nor one less intrusive, only reminding you of me when you choose to give an audience, and then always saying better things than I could. So pray do not give her her passports yet. I shall bring the "Conversations" when I am happy enough to come myself.

Now, in order that you may not fancy (as most persons who go to Rhode Island do) that Newport is the only place in the world where there is any virtue in salt water—I will say a word or two of Beverly. Country and sea-shore are combined here in the most charming way. Find the Yankee word for Sorrento, and you have Beverly—it is only the Bay of Naples translated into the New England dialect. The ocean and the forest are not estranged here, and the trees trust themselves down

to the water's edge most confidingly. In some places the ivy plays in the air and the kelp in the water, like children of different ranks making shy advances to each other. Close behind us rises a rocky hill, and the pine woods begin—wonderful woods, called Witch Woods by the natives because it is so easy to lose your way in them. All through them strange rocks bulge out—amphibious-looking hybrids between sea-shore and inland—their upper edges fringed lightly with ferns that seem to entangle the sunshine and hold it fast, and their bases rough with queer lichens that look like water-weeds. I think there is more ocean than land in the blood of these rocks, and they always seem to me listening and waiting for the waves. If you leap down from one of them you sink ankle-deep in springy pine-tassel or moss. Somewhere in these woods is a visionary clearing and farm-house, which every one gets a glimpse of—but no man hath seen twice. You hear the crowing of cocks, the contented low of cattle rubbing their soft throats over the polished bars, and sometimes a muffled throb of flails; presently, through some wood-gap, you see the chimney and the blue breath of the hearth in the cool air, but when you have made your way through the next thicket, all is gone. I think it is the farm of one of the old Salem warlocks, and buy my vegetables warily, fearful of some ill thing. Here and there, climbing some higher rock, you get a gleam of sea through some scoop in the woods—a green cup filled half with potable gold.

We are in a little house close upon the road, with the sea just below, as seen through a fringe of cedar, wild cherry, and barberry. Beyond this fringe is a sand-beach where we bathe. . . . As I look out of my window I see the flicker of the sea's golden scales (which the moon will by and by touch with her long wand and turn to silver) stretching eastward forever. We are at the foot of a bay, across the mouth of which lies a line of islands —some bare rock, some shrubby, and some wooded. These are the true islands of the Sirens. One has been disenchanted by a great hotel to which a steamboat runs innumerably every day with a band—the energetic *boong! boong!—boong! boong! boong!*—of the bass drum being all we hear. Our sunset is all in the southeast, and every

evening the clouds and islands bloom and the slow sails are yellowed and the dories become golden birds swinging on the rosy water.

Well, well, after all, I am only saying that Nature is here as well as at Newport, and that she has not lost her knack at miracles. But at Newport you have no woods, and ours are so grand and deep and unconverted! They have those long pauses of conscious silence that are so fine, as if the spirit that inhabits them were hiding from you and holding its breath—and then all the leaves stir again, and the pines cheat the rocks with their mock surf, and that invisible bird that haunts such solitudes calls once and is answered, and then silence again. I would not have told you how much better this is than your Rhode Island glories—only that you Newport folks always seem a little (I must go to my Yankee) *stuck up,* as if Newport were all the world, and you the saints that had inherited it. But I hope to see you and Newport soon, and I will be lenient. You shall find in me the Beverly grandeur of soul which can acknowledge alien merit.

[Æt. 36]

To C. E. Norton

[walt whitman]

Dresden, Monday, Oct. 12, 1855.

. . . Whitman—I remember him of old; he used to write for the *Democratic Review* under O'Sullivan. He used to do stories then, *à la* Hawthorne. No, no, the kind of thing you describe won't do. When a man aims at originality he acknowledges himself consciously unoriginal, a want of self-respect which does not often go along with the capacity for great things. The great fellows have always let the stream of their activity flow quietly—if one splashes in it he may make a sparkle, but he muddies it too, and the good folks down below (I mean posterity) will have none of it. We have a feeling of quiet and easy-going power in the really great that makes us willing to commit ourselves with them. Sometimes I have thought that Michel Agnolo cocked his hat

a little wee bit too much, but after seeing his Prophets and Sybils (i y) you'll say I'm a wretch. It is not the volcanoes, after all, that give a lasting and serene delight, but those quiet old giants without a drop of fireblood in their veins that lie there basking their unwarmable old sides in the sun no more everlasting than they—patent unshiftable ballast that keep earth and human thought trimmed and true on an even keel. Ah, the cold-blooded old monsters, how little they care for you and me! Homer, Plato, Dante, Shakespeare, Cervantes, Goethe—are they not everlasting boundary-stones that mark the limits of a noble reserve and self-restraint, and seem to say, "Outside of us is Chaos—go there if you like—*we* knew better—it is a dreary realm where moan the ghosts of dead-born children, and where the ghost of mad old Lear is king?"

My dear Norton, upon my word I am not giving you an extract from my next lecture. . . .

[Æt. 38]

To C. E. Norton

[morning walks]

Cambridge, Dec. 31, 1857.

My dear Charles,—

At last! Like a true lazzarone as I am I have been waiting for sunshine before I wrote—I mean, for one of those moods that would make a letter worth sending; and such a mood is not dependent on mere cheerfulness, but almost altogether on having nothing to do, so that one can have time to hatch one's thoughts fairly out as one goes along. Pen and paper are never inspiring to me as conversation sometimes is,—and I was born to sit on a fence in the sun, and (if I had my own way) in those latter days of May, when the uneasy blue-bird shifts his freight of song from post to post, and the new green of spring is just passing from the miraculous into the familiar. . . .

For a lazy man I have a great deal to do. A magazine*

* The *Atlantic Monthly*, which he was editing.

allows no vacations. What with manuscripts and proofs and what not, it either takes up or breaks up all one's time. . . .

But even the magazine has its compensations. First, it has almost got me out of debt, and next, it compels me into morning walks to the printing-office. There is a little foot-path which leads along the river-bank, and it is lovely; whether in clear, cold mornings, when the fine filaments of the bare trees on the horizon seem floating up like sea-masses in the ether sea, or when (as yesterday) a gray mist fills our Cambridge cup and gives a doubtful loom to its snowy brim of hills, while the silent gulls wheel over the rustling cakes of ice which the Charles is whirling seaward. So I get my bits of country and can feel like a rustic still, but I miss the winter-birds I used to see at home. I continue to think the marshes lovely, and this winter they are covered with plump ricks, whereof some half-dozen standing on my own amphibious territory give me a feeling of ownership and dignity, albeit the hay does not belong to me. This only strengthens a faith I have long held, that we are only metaphysically and imaginatively rich as far as mere possession goes, and only actually so in what we give away. . . .

[Æt. 39]

To Miss Norton

[GOUT]

Cambridge, Aug. 30, 1858.

. . . Since I got your Berkshire letter I have come into an inheritance—I have had my life insured for forty years—I have been chained by one leg—I have suffered the torture of the Boot—I have said disrespectful things of my great-grandfather—I have received no sympathy, but have been laughed at—I have laughed myself, sometimes on the wrong side of my mouth—in short, I have had an attack of the—no, I won't tell you what yet. I will prepare your mind. I will dignify it by poetic precedent. I may compare myself with Milton (in this respect). I may claim brotherhood with Gray and Wal-

pole. In short I have had the *gout*. I cannot escape the conclusion that I am a middle-aged man. I even fear that I shall have to wear a special shoe on my left foot. My verses will no longer be admired by young ladies of sixteen. On the other hand, I have been thinking over the advantages. I find by the books that (if nothing happens) I shall live long. That it "relieves the system"—which seems to be true, for I have not been so well for a year. That in the course of time I shall be able to write my name and keep my milk-score with my knuckles. That I shall always have an excuse for being as testy as I please. On the whole, I think the odds are in favor of podagra. The worst danger is that the eyes are liable to be painfully affected with *iritis*—a comprehensive Greek term implying that the eye-wrong-is. But this is more than set off by the certainty that I shall never be subject to that *in-great-toe otio* to which Nereus, according to Horace, doomed the winds. (Since making these two puns I have carefully fumigated the paper, so that you need not fear infection.) As soon as my father heard of my trouble he came to see me, bringing a cyclopædia of medicine (from which he has selected a variety of choice complaints for himself), that my reading might be of an enlivening character. I do not find that there is any specific for the gout, but, on the *similia-similibus* principle, I eat "tomarters" daily. The disease derives its name (like *mons a non movendo*) from the patient's inability to *go out*. The ordinary derivation from *gutta* is absurd—for not only is the German form *Gicht* deduced from *gehen*, but the persons incident to the malady are precisely those who themselves (or their ancestors for them) have kept just this side of the gutter. I never heard that my great-grandfather died insolvent, but I am obliged to *foot* some of his bills for port. I can't help thinking that I shall be worse if I indulge any longer in this kind of thing—so I shall stop. . . .

[Æt. 39]

To O. W. Holmes

[THE "PROFESSOR"; "SAMSON'S WEAPON"]

Cambridge, Dec. 19, 1858.

My dear Wendell,—

Thank you ever so much for the "Autocrat," who comes at last drest like a gentleman. The color of the paper is just that which knowers love to see in old lace.

"Run out" indeed!—who has been suggesting the danger of that to you? I hope you will continue to run out in the style of the first "Professor." The comparison of the bung and the straw is excellent and touched a very tender spot in me, who was born between two cider-mills, and drew in much childish belly-ache from both, turned now by memory into something like the result that might follow nectar.

You have been holding-in all this while — *possumus omnes,* we all play the 'possum—and are now getting your second wind. I like the new Professor better than the old Autocrat. You have filled no ten pages so wholly to my liking as in the January number. I have just read it and am delighted with it. The "Old Boston" is an inspiration. You have never been so wise and witty as in this last number. I hold up my left foot in token of my unanimity.

The religious press (a true sour-cider press with belly-ache privileges attached) will be at you, but after smashing one of them you will be able to furnish yourself with a Samson's weapon for the rest of the Philisterei. Good-by.

Always affectionately yours,
J. R. Lowell.

[Æt. 41]

To W. D. Howells

["HOLD YOURSELF DEAR"]

Cambridge, Monday, Aug., 1860.

My dear young Friend,—

Here is a note to Mr. Hawthorne, which you can use if you have occasion.

Don't print too much and too soon; don't get married

in a hurry; read what will make you *think*, not *dream;* hold yourself dear, and more power to your elbow! God bless you! Cordially yours,

J. R. Lowell.

A man may have ever so much in him, but ever so much depends on how he gets it out.

Finis, quoad Biglow.

To Nathaniel Hawthorne

[william dean howells]

Cambridge, Aug. 5, 1860.

My dear Hawthorne,—

I have no masonic claim upon you except community of tobacco, and the young man who brings this does not smoke.

But he wants to look at you, which will do you no harm, and him a great deal of good.

His name is Howells, and he is a fine young fellow, and has written several *poems* in the *Atlantic*, which of course you have never read, because you don't do such things yourself, and are old enough to know better.

When I think how much you might have profited by the perusal of certain verses of somebody who shall be nameless—but, no matter! If my judgment is good for anything, this youth has more in him than any of our younger fellows in the way of rhyme.

Of course he can't hope to rival the *Consule Planco* men. Therefore let him look at you, and charge it

To yours always,

J. R. Lowell.

[Æt. 42]

To Miss Norton

[a misdated letter]

Elmwood, the day before you wrote your last letter; viz., Sept. 28, 1861.

My dear Sibyl,—

Will you kindly tell me what *has happened* next week, so that I may be saved from this daily debauch of newspapers? How many "heroic Mulligans" who *"meurent et ne se rendent pas"* to the reporters, with the privilege of

living and surrendering to the enemy? How many "terrific conflicts" near Cheat Mountain (ominous name), with one wounded on our side, and enemy's loss supposed to be heavy? How many times we are to save Kentucky and lose our selfrespect? How many times the Potomac is to be "hermetically sealed"? How often Mr. Seward is to put newspaper correspondents on the level of Secretaries of State? etc., etc. I ask all these questions because your so-welcome letter, which I received on Wednesday the 25th, was dated to-morrow the 29th. There is something very impressive to the imagination in a letter from the future, and to be even a day in advance of the age is a good deal—how much more five or six! How does it seem to come back? Is not everything weary and stale? Or do you live all the time in a balloon, thus seeing over the lines of Time, the old enemy of us all? Pray tell me how much foolisher I shall be this day twelve-month. Well, at any rate, you can't see far enough to find the day when your friendship shall not be one of my dearest possessions. . . .

Has it begun to be cold with you? I had a little Italian bluster of brushwood fire yesterday morning, but the times are too hard with me to allow of such an extravagance except on the brink of gelation. The horror of my tax-bill has so infected my imagination that I see myself and all my friends begging entrance to the P. H. (From delicacy I use initials.) I fancy all of you gathering fuel on the Newport beaches. I hope you will have lots of wrecks—Southern privateers, of course. Don't ever overload yourself. I can't bear to think of you looking like the poor women I met in the Pineta at Ravenna just at dusk, having the air of moving druidical altars or sudden toadstools.

Our trees are beginning to turn—the maples are all ablaze, and even in our *ashes* live their wonted fires. The Virginia creeper that I planted against the old horse-chestnut stump trickles down in blood as if its support were one of Dante's living wood. The haze has begun, and the lovely mornings when one blesses the sun. I confess our summer weather too often puts one in mind of Smithfield and the Book of Martyrs.

I have had an adventure. I have dined with a prince.

After changing my mind twenty times, I at last sat down desperately and "had the honor to accept." And I was glad of it—for H. I. H.'s resemblance to his uncle is something wonderful. I had always supposed the portraits of the elder Nap imperialized, but Jerome N. looks as if he had sat for that picture where the emperor lies reading on a sofa—you remember it. A trifle weaker about the mouth, suggesting loss of teeth; but it is not so, for his teeth are exquisite. He looks as you would fancy his uncle if he were *Empereur de Ste. Hélène, roi d'Yvetôt.* I sat next to colonel Ragon, who led the forlorn hope at the taking of the Malakoff and was at the siege of Rome. He was a very pleasant fellow. (I don't feel quite sure of my English yet—J'ai tant parlé Français que je trouve beaucoup de difficulté à m'y déshabituer.) Pendant — I mean during — the dinner Ooendel Homes récitait des vers vraiment jolis. Il arrivait déjà au bout, quand M. Ragon, se tournant vers moi d'un air mêlé d'intelligence et d'interrogation, et à la même fois d'un Colomb qui fait la découverte d'un monde tout nouveau, s'écria, "C'est en vers, Monsieur, n'est ce pas?" St'anegdot charmang j'ai rahcontay ah Ooendell daypwee, avec days eclah de reer. (See Bolmar.) Mr. Everett made a speech où il y avait un soupçon de longueur. The prince replied most gracefully, as one

"Who saying nothing yet saith all."

He speaks French exquisitely—foi de professeur. Ho parlato anche Italiano col Colonello, chi è stato sei anni in Italia, and I believe I should have tried Hebrew with the secretary of legation, who looked like a Jew, if I had had the chance. After dinner the prince was brought up and *presented to me!* Please remember that when we meet. The political part of our conversation of course I am not at liberty to repeat(!!), but he asked me whether I myself occupied of any work literary at present? to which I answered, no. Then he spoke of the factories at Lowell and Lawrence, and said how much the intelligence of the operatives had interested him, etc., etc. He said that Boston seemed to have much more movement intellectual than the rest of the country (to which I replied. *nous* le croyons, au moins); astonished

himself at the freedom of opinion here, etc., at the absence of Puritanism and the like. I thought him very intelligent and thanked him for his bo deescoor o saynah Frongsay shure lays ahfair deetahlee. (See Bolmar again, which I took in my pocket.) . . .

Ever yours,
J. R. L.

[Æt. 46]

To Miss Norton

[HOT WEATHER; THE "COMMEMORATION ODE"]

Elmwood, July 25, 1865.

My dear Jane,—

However statures and wits may degenerate, and we become, as Donne says, "our fathers' shadows cast at noon," July keeps his old force and is pleasing himself to-day with a noble display of it. It is so hot that the very locusts are dumb and cannot endure to carry on their own trade of spinning out "their long-drawn, red-hot wires of shrilly song," as they are called in a lost poem of Pindar's, from which I translate by direct inspiration of a scholiast turned table-tipper. Each under his cool leaf is taking his siesta. There is an unpleasing moisture even in the slender palms of the flies that fondle the restiff tip of my nose. The thin gray lives of mosquitoes are burnt up and evaporate. My anxious shirt-collar still stiffly holds its undiminished state, but with a damp foreboding of its doom. In short, dear Jane, it is just such a day as the Clerk of the Weather, abusing his opportunities, invariably appoints for public festivities—just such a day as were the Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday of last week. Nevertheless, I am here among my books and I am in a literal sense alive. I eat and smoke and sleep and go through all the nobler functions of a man mechanically still, and wonder at myself as at something outside of and alien to Me. For have I not worked myself lean on an "Ode for Commemoration"? Was I not so rapt with the fervor of conception as I have not been these ten years, losing my sleep, my appetite, and my flesh, those attributes to which I before alluded as nobly uniting us in a common nature with our kind? Did I not for two days exasperate everybody that came near

me by reciting passages in order to try them on? Did I not even fall backward and downward to the old folly of hopeful youth, and think I had written something *really* good at last? And am I not now enduring those retributive dumps which ever follow such sinful exultations, the Erynnyes of Vanity? Did not I make John Holmes and William Story shed tears by my recitation of it (my ode) in the morning, both of 'em fervently declaring it was "noble"? Did not even the silent Rowse declare 'twas in a higher mood than much or most of later verse? Did not I think, in my nervous exhilaration, that 'twould be *the* feature (as reporters call it) of the day? And, after all, have I not a line in the *Daily Advertiser* calling it a "graceful poem" (or "some graceful verses," I forget which), which "was received with applause"? Why, Jane, my legs are those of grasshoppers and my head is an autumn threshing-floor, still beating with the alternate flails of strophe and antistrophe, and an infinite virtue is gone out of me somehow—but it seems *not* into my verse as I dreamed. Well, well, Charles will like it—but then he always does, so what's the use? I am Icarus now with the cold salt sea over him instead of the warm exulting blue of ether. I am gone under, and I will never be a fool again. You read between the lines, don't you, my dear old friend, if I may dare to call a woman so? You know my foibles—women always know our foibles, confound them!—though they always wink at the right moment and seem not to see—bless them! Like a boy, I mistook my excitement for inspiration, and here I am in the mud. You see also I am a little disappointed and a little few (*un petit peu*) vexed. I did *not* make the hit I expected, and am ashamed at having been again tempted into thinking I could write poetry, a delusion from which I have been tolerably free these dozen years. . . .

26th.

The Storys have got home and look as young as ever. I first saw William on Commencement day, and glad enough I was. A friendship counting nearly forty years is the finest kind of shade-tree I know of. One is safe from thunder beneath it, as under laurel—nay, more safe, for the critical bolts do not respect the sacred tree any more

than if it were so much theatrical green baize. To be sure, itself is of the harmless theatrical kind often enough. Well, he and two more came up hither after dinner, and we talked and laughed and smoked and drank Domdechanei till there wasn't a bald head nor a gray hair among us. Per Bacco and tobacco, how wisely silly we were! I forgot for a few blessed hours that I was a professor, and felt as if I were something real. But Phi Beta came next day, and *wasn't* I tired! Presiding from 9 A. M. till 6½ P. M. is no joke, and then up next morning at ½ past 4 to copy out and finish my ode. I have not got cool yet (I mean as to nerves), and lie awake at night thinking how much better my verses might have been, only I can't make 'em so. Well, I am printing fifty copies in 4to, and Charles will like it, as I said before, and I sha'n't, because I thought too well of it at first. . . .

Yours always,
J. R. L.

[Æt. 48]

To C. E. Norton

["such stuff as stars are made of"]

Elmwood, July 18, 1867.

. . . Emerson's oration was more disjointed than usual, even with *him*. It began nowhere and ended everywhere, and yet, as always with that divine man, it left you feeling that something beautiful had passed that way—something more beautiful than anything else, like the rising and setting of stars. Every possible criticism might have been made on it but one—that it was not noble. There was a tone in it that awakened all elevating associations. He boggled, he lost his place, he had to put on his glasses; but it was as if a creature from some fairer world had lost his way in our fogs, and it was *our* fault, not his. It was chaotic, but it was all such stuff as stars are made of, and you couldn't help feeling that, if you waited awhile, all that was nebulous would be whirled into planets, and would assume the mathematical gravity of system. All through it I felt something in me that cried "Ha, ha, to the sound of the trumpets!". . .

[Æt. 50]

To Miss Norton

[on letter-writing]

Elmwood, April 6th, 1869.

. . . Authors, my altogether dear woman, can't write letters. At best they squeeze out an essay now and then, burying every natural sprout in a dry and dreary *sand-flood,* as unlike as possible to those delightful freshets with which your heart overflows the paper. *They* are thinking of their punctuation, of crossing their *t's* and dotting their *i's,* and cannot forget themselves in their correspondent, which I take to be the true recipe for a letter. . . . Now, you know that the main excellence of Cambridge is that nothing ever happens there. Since the founding of the College, in 1636, there has been, properly speaking, no event till J. H. began to build his shops on the parsonage-lot. . . . Elmwood is Cambridge at the fifth power, and indeed one of the great merits of the country is that it narcotizes instead of stimulating. Even Voltaire, who had wit at will, found Ferney an opiate, and is forced to apologize to *his* cleverest correspondent, Mme. du Deffand (do you remark the adroitness of the compliment in my italicized pronoun?) for the prolonged gaps, or yawns, in his letter-writing. Cowper, a first-rate epistolizer, was sometimes driven to the wall in the same way. There is something more than mere vacancy, there is a deep principle of human nature, in the first question of man to man when they meet—"What is the news?" A hermit has none. I fancy if I were suddenly snatched away to London, my brain would prickle all over, as a foot that has been asleep when the blood starts in it again. Books are good dry forage; we can keep alive on them; but, after all, men are the only fresh pasture. . . .

We have had a very long winter with very little snow. It is still cold, but the birds are come, and the impatient lovers among them insist on its being spring. I heard a blue-bird several weeks ago, but the next day came six inches of snow. The sparrows were the first persistent singers, and yesterday the robins were loud

I have no doubt the pines at Shady Hill are all a-creak with blackbirds by this time. . . .

I have nothing else in the way of novelty, except an expedient I hit upon for my hens who were backward with their eggs. On rainy days I set William to reading aloud to them the Lay-Sermons of Coleridge, and the effect was magical. Whether their consciences were touched or they wished to escape the preaching, I know not. . . .

[Æt. 50]

To T. B. Aldrich

["THE STORY OF A BAD BOY"]

Elmwood, Nov. 30, 1869.

My dear Aldrich,—

It is a capital little book—but I had read it all before, and liked it thoroughly. It has been pretty much all my novel reading all summer. I think it is wholesome, interesting, and above all, natural. The only quarrel I have with you is that I found in it that infamous word "transpired." E-pluribus-unum it! Why not "happened"? You are on the very brink of the pit. I read in the paper t'other day that some folks had "extended a dinner to the Hon." Somebody or other. There was something pleasing to the baser man in fancying it held out in a pair of tongs, as too many of our Hon'bles deserve—but consider where English is going!

I know something about Rivermouth myself; only before you were born. I remember in my seventh year opening a long red chest in the "mansion" of the late famous Dr. Brackett, and being confronted with a skeleton—the first I had ever seen. The "Mysteries of Udolpho" were nothing to it, for a child, somehow, is apt to think that these anatomies are always made so by foul means, a creed which I still hold to a certain extent.

However, I am not writing to tell you about myself—but merely to say how much I like your little book. I wish it had been twice as large! I shall send you a thin one of my own before long, and shall be content if it give you half the pleasure. Make my kind remem-

brances acceptable to Mrs. Aldrich, and tell the twins I wish they may both grow up Bad Boys.

Cordially yours,
J. R. Lowell.

[Æt. 53]

To C. E. Norton

["The Idylls of the King" and "real Arthurian romance"]

Hôtel de Lorraine, No. 7 Rue de Beaune.
Paris, Dec. 4, 1872.

. . . Oddly enough when I got your letter about Tennyson's poems I had just finished reading a *real* Arthurian romance—"Fergus"—not one of the best, certainly, but having that merit of being a genuine blossom for which no triumph of artifice can compensate; having, in short, that *woodsy* hint and tantalization of perfume which is so infinitely better than anything more defined. Emerson had left me Tennyson's book; so last night I took it to bed with me and finished it at a gulp—reading like a naughty boy till half-past one. The contrast between his pomp and my old rhymer's simpleness was very curious and even instructive. One bit of the latter (which I cannot recollect elsewhere) amused me a good deal as a Yankee. When Fergus comes to Arthur's court and Sir Kay "sarses" him (which, you know, is *de rigeur* in the old poems), Sir Gawain saunters up *whittling a stick* as a medicine against ennui. So afterwards, when Arthur is dreadfully bored by hearing no news of Fergus, he reclines at table without any taste for his dinner, and whittles to purge his heart of melancholy. I suppose a modern poet would not dare to come so near Nature as this lest she should fling up her heels. But I am not yet "aff wi' the auld love," nor quite "on with the new." There are very fine childish things in Tennyson's poems and fine manly things, too, as it seems to me, but I conceive the theory to be wrong. I have the same feeling (I am not wholly sure of its justice) that I have when I see these modern-mediæval pictures. I am defrauded; I do not see reality, but a masquerade. The costumes are all that is genuine, and the people inside them are shams—which, I take it,

is just the reverse of what ought to be. One special criticism I should make on Tennyson's new Idylls, and that is that the similes are so often dragged in by the hair. They seem to be taken (*à la* Tom Moore) from notebooks, and not suggested by the quickened sense of association in the glow of composition. Sometimes it almost seems as if the verses were made for the similes, instead of being the cresting of a wave that heightens as it rolls. This is analogous to the costume objection and springs perhaps from the same cause—the making of poetry with malice prepense. However, I am not going to forget the lovely things that Tennyson has written, and I think they give him rather hard measure now. However, it is the natural recoil of a too rapid fame. Wordsworth had the true kind—an unpopularity that roused and stimulated while he was strong enough to despise it, and honor, obedience, troops of friends, when the grasshopper would have been a burthen to the drooping shoulders. Tennyson, to be sure, has been childishly petulant; but what have these whipper-snappers, who cry "Go up, bald head," done that can be named with some things of his? He has been the greatest artist in words we have had since Gray—and remember how Gray holds his own with little fuel, but real fire. He had the secret of the inconsumable oil, and so, I fancy, has Tennyson.

I keep on picking up books here and there, but I shall be forced to stop, for I find I have got beyond my income. Still, I shall try gradually to make my Old French and Provençal collection tolerably complete, for the temptation is great where the field is definitely bounded. . . .

[Æt. 59]

To Miss Grace Norton

[IMMORTALITY]

Madrid, March 7, 1878.

. . . I don't care where the notion of immortality came from. If it sprang out of a controlling necessity of our nature, some instinct of self-protection and preservation, like the color of some of Darwin's butterflies, at any

rate it is there and as real as that, and I mean to hold it fast. Suppose we don't *know,* how much *do* we know after all? There are times when one doubts his own identity, even his own material entity, even the solidity of the very earth on which he walks. One night, the last time I was ill, I lost all consciousness of my flesh. I was dispersed through space in some inconceivable fashion, and mixed with the Milky Way. It was with great labor that I gathered myself again and brought myself within compatible limits, or so it seemed; and yet the very fact that I had a confused consciousness all the while of the Milky Way as something to be mingled with proved that I was there as much an individual as ever. . . .

[Æt. 63]

To W. D. Howells

[ADVICE TO AN AUTHOR]

Ashridge, Berkhampstead, Dec. 21, 1882.

Dear Howells,—

I was very glad to get your letter, though it put me under bonds to be wiser than I have ever had the skill to be. If I remember rightly, Panurge's doubts were increased by consulting the Oracle, but how did the Oracle feel? Did it ever occur to you that a certain share of our sympathy should go in that direction?

My best judgment is this, and like all good judgment it is to a considerable degree on both sides of the question. If you are able now, without overworking mind or body, to keep the wolf from the door and to lay by something for a rainy day—and I mean, of course, without being driven to work with your left hand because the better one is tired out—I should refuse the offer, or should hesitate to accept it. If you are a systematic worker, independent of moods, and sure of your genius whenever you want it, there might be no risk in accepting. You would have the advantage of a fixed income to fall back on. Is this a greater advantage than the want of it would be as a spur to industry? Was not the occasion of Shakespeare's plays (I don't say the motive of 'em) that he *had* to write? And are any of us likely to

be better inspired than he? Does not inspiration, in some limited sense at least, come with the exercise thereof, as the appetite with eating? Is not your hand better for keeping it in, as they say? A professorship takes a great deal of time, and, if you teach in any more direct way than by lectures, uses up an immense stock of nerves. Your inevitable temptation (in some sort your duty) will be to make yourself *learned*—which you haven't the least need to be as an author (if you only have me at your elbow to correct your English now and then, naughty boy!). If you can make your professorship a thing apart—but can you and be honest? I believe the present generation doesn't think I was made for a poet, but I think I could have gone nearer convincing 'em if I had not estranged the muse by donning a professor's gown. I speak of myself because you wanted my experience. I am naturally indolent, and being worked pretty hard in the College, was willing to be content with the amount of work that was squeezed out of me by my position, and let what my nature might otherwise have forced me into go. As I said before, if you can reckon on your own temperament, accept. If you have a doubt, *don't*. I think you will divine what I am driving at.

I find everybody here reading your books, and you know very well how much pleasure that gives me. They wish to see you, and I hope when you come back you will stay and let 'em do it. I wish you could know my hostess, for instance—noble in all senses of the word. I am staying here for a few days with a large party in a house as big as a small town, and a beautiful country of hill and dale and gray birch woods. Enough to say that there was once a convent here. The monks always had an eye for country.

You will have to be very fine when you show yourself in England, to look like the portrait I have painted of you—but I am willing to take the venture.

Inexorable lunch has sounded, and I must say good-by. I should say, on the whole—it is safe to ask my advice, but not to follow it. But then people never do.

. . . Love to all.

Affectionately yours,

J. R. L.

[Æt. 70]

To Mrs. Leslie Stephen

[A grave rook]

Whitby, Sept. 11, 1889.

. . . For the last few days we have been having American weather, except for the haze which softens and civilizes (perhaps I should say, artistically generalizes) all it touches, like the slower hand of time. It does in a moment what the other is too long about for the brevity of our lives. How I do love this unemphatic landscape, which suggests but never defines, in which so much license is left to conjecture and divination, as when one looks into the mysterious beyond. And how the robins and some other little minstrels whose names I don't know keep on pretending it is the very fresh of the year. I think few people are made as happy by the singing of birds as I, and this autumnal music (unknown at home), every bush a song, is one of the things that especially endear England to me. Even without song, birds are a perpetual delight, and the rooks alone are enough to make this country worth living in. I wish you could see a rook who every morning busies himself among the chimney-pots opposite my chamber window. For a good while I used to hear his chuckle, but thought he was only flying over. But one day I got out of bed and looked out. There he was on the top of a chimney opposite, perambulating gravely, and now and then cocking his head and looking down a flue. Then he would chuckle and go to another. Then to the next chimney and *da capo*. He found out what they were going to have for breakfast in every house, and whether he enjoyed an imaginary feast or reckoned on a chance at some of the leavings I know not, but he was evidently enjoying himself, and that is always a consoling thing to see. Even in the stingy back-yards of these houses too, wherever there is a disconsolate shrub, a robin comes every morning to cheer it up a bit and help it along through the day.

Since I wrote what I did about the weather (one should always let the Eumenides alone) it has begun to rain, but gently, like a rain that was trying to dis-

criminate between the just and the unjust, and sympathized with those confiding enough to leave their umbrellas behind them (I hate to expose *mine* any more than I can help, for reasons of my own). So the rain let me get back dry from the beach, whither I had gone for a whiff of salt air and a few earfuls of that muffled crash of the surf which is so soothing—perpetual ruin with perpetual renewal.

I wonder if your moors have been as gracious as ours this year. I never know how deeply they impress me till long after I have left them, and then I wonder at the store of images wherewith they have peopled my memory. But what is the use of my asking you any questions when you tell me you could not read my last letter? Was it the blue paper with its ribs that made a corduroy road for my pen to jolt over, I wonder, or my failing eyesight, or—and this is saddest to think of—the dulness of the letter itself? Is this better? I am trying to write as well as I can for my dear and admirable friend, but what would you have? How should one write letters worth reading who has so many to write as I? But never mind. The true use of a letter is to let one know that one is remembered and valued, and as you are sure of that, perhaps I need not write at all! No, the true use of writing is that it brings your friend to you as you write, and so I have your sweet society for a while, and you need have only just as much of mine as you choose to give yourself. . . .

[Æt. 70]

To the Misses Lawrence

[life at elmwood]

Elmwood, Cambridge, Mass.,
Jan. 2, 1890.

. . . Here I am again in the house where I was born longer ago than you can remember, though I wish you more New Year's days than I have had. 'Tis a pleasant old house just about twice as old as I am, four miles from Boston, in what was once the country and is now a populous suburb. But it still has some ten acres of

open about it, and some fine old trees. When the worst comes to the worst (if I live so long) I shall still have four and a half acres left with the house, the rest belonging to my brothers and sisters or their heirs. It is a square house with four rooms on a floor, like some houses of the Georgian era I have seen in English provincial towns, only they are of brick and this is of wood. But it is solid with its heavy oaken beams, the spaces between which in the four outer walls are filled in with brick, though you mustn't fancy a brick-and-timber house, for outwardly it is sheathed with wood. Inside there is much wainscot (of deal) painted white in the fashion of the time when it was built. It is very sunny, the sun rising so as to shine (at an acute angle, to be sure) through the northern windows, and going round the other three sides in the course of the day. There is a pretty staircase with the quaint old twisted banisters—which they call balusters now, but mine are banisters. My library occupies two rooms opening into each other by arches at the sides of the ample chimneys. The trees I look out on are the earliest things I remember. There you have me in my new-old quarters. But you must not fancy a large house—rooms sixteen feet square and, on the ground floor, nine high. It was large, as things went here, when it was built, and has a certain air of amplitude about it as from some inward sense of dignity.

Now for out of doors. What do you suppose the thermometer is about on this second day of January? I was going to say he was standing on his head—at any rate he has forgotten what he's about, and is marking sixty-three degrees Fahrenheit on the north side of the house and in the shade! Where is that sense of propriety that once belonged to the seasons? This is flat communism, January insisting on going halves with May. News I have none, nor other resources, as you see, save those of the special correspondent, who takes to description when events fail. Yes, I have one event. I dine to-night with Mr. R. C. Winthrop, who remembers your father very well nearly sixty years ago.

I have all my grandchildren with me, five of them, and the eldest boy is already conspiring with a beard! It is

awful, this stealthy advance of Time's insupportable foot. There are two ponies for the children and two dogs, bull-terriers, and most amiable creatures. This is my establishment, and four of the weans have had the *grippe*. I remember it here in '31, I think it was. You see I make all I can of age's one privilege—that of having a drearier memory than other folks.

I forgot one thing. There are plenty of mice in the walls, and, now that I can't go to the play with you, I assist at their little tragedies and comedies behind the wainscot in the night-hours and build up plots in my fancy. 'Tis a French company, for I hear them distinctly say *wee; wee,* sometimes. My life, you see, is not without its excitements, and what are your London mice doing that is more important? I see you are to have a Parnell scandal at last, but I overheard an elopement the other night behind the wainscot, and the solicitors talking it over with the desolated husband afterwards. It was very exciting. Ten thousand grains of corn damaged!

Good-by, and take care of yourselves till I come with the daffodils. I wish you both many a happy New Year and a share for me in some of them. Poets seem to live long nowadays, and I, too, live in Arcadia after my own fashion.

Affectionately yours,
J. R. L.

[Æt. 44]

WALT WHITMAN
1819–1892

To his Mother
[in a war hospital]

Washington July 22, 1863

This afternoon, July 22d, I have spent a long time with Oscar F. Wilber, Company G, 154th New York, low with chronic diarrhœa and a bad wound also. He asked me to read him a chapter in the New Testament. I complied, and ask'd him what I should read. He said, "Make your own choice." I open'd at the close of one of the first books of the evangelists, and read the chap-

ters describing the latter hours of Christ, and the scenes at the crucifixion. The poor, wasted young man ask'd me to read the following chapter also, how Christ rose again. I read very slowly, for Oscar was feeble. It pleased him very much, yet the tears were in his eyes. He ask'd me if I enjoy'd religion. I said, "Perhaps not, my dear, in the way you mean, and yet, may-be, it is the same thing." He said, "It is my chief reliance." He talked of death, and said he did not fear it. I said, "Why, Oscar, don't you think you will get well?" He said, "I may, but it is not probable." He spoke calmly of his condition. The wound was very bad; it discharg'd much. Then the diarrhœa had prostrated him, and I felt he was even then the same as dying. He behaved very manly and affectionate. The kiss I gave him as I was about leaving he return'd fourfold. He gave me his mother's address, Mrs. Sally D. Wilber, Allegheny Post Office, Cattaraugus County, N. Y. I had several such interviews with him. He died a few days after the one just described.

[Æt. 23] CHARLES KINGSLEY
1819–1875

To Mr. Wood

["THE EVERLASTING HILLS AND THE EVERLASTING BORES"]

[1842]

Peter!

Whether in the glaring saloons of Almack's, or making love in the equestrian stateliness of the park, or the luxurious recumbency of the ottoman, whether breakfasting at one, or going to bed at three, thou art still Peter, the beloved of my youth, the staff of my academic days, the regret of my parochial retirement!—Peter! I am alone! Around me are the everlasting hills, and the everlasting bores of the country! My parish is peculiar for nothing but want of houses and abundance of peat bogs; my parishioners remarkable only for aversion to education, and a predilection for fat bacon. I am wasting my sweetness on the desert air—I say my sweetness, for I

have given up smoking, and smell no more. Oh, Peter, Peter, come down and see me! Oh that I could behold your head towering above the fir-trees that surround my lonely dwelling. Take pity on me! I am "like a kitten in the washhouse copper with the lid on!" And, Peter, prevail on some of your friends here to give me a day's trout-fishing, for my hand is getting out of practice. But, Peter, I am, considering the oscillations and perplex circumgurgitations of this piece-meal world, an improved man. I am much more happy, much more comfortable, reading, thinking, and doing my duty—much more than ever I did before in my life. Therefore I am not discontented with my situation, or regretful that I buried my first-class in a country curacy, like the girl who shut herself up in a band-box on her wedding night (*vide* Rogers's "Italy"). And my lamentations are not general (for I do not want an inundation of the froth and tide-wash of Babylon the Great), but particular, being solely excited by want of thee, oh Peter, who art very pleasant to me, and wouldst be more so if thou wouldst come and eat my mutton, and drink my wine, and admire my sermons, some Sunday at Eversley.

Your faithful friend,

BOANERGES ROAR-AT-THE CLODS.

[Æt. 35] GEORGE ELIOT

1819–1880

To MRS. BRAY

[GEORGE HENRY LEWES]

4th September, 1855.

. . . If there is any one action or relation of my life which is, and always has been, profoundly serious, it is my relation to Mr. Lewes. It is, however, natural enough that you should mistake me in many ways, for not only are you unacquainted with Mr. Lewes's real character and the course of his actions, but also it is several years now since you and I were much together, and it is possible that the modifications my mind has undergone may be quite in the opposite direction of what you im-

agine. No one can be better aware than yourself that it is possible for two people to hold different opinions on momentous subjects with equal sincerity, and an equally earnest conviction that their respective opinions are alone the truly moral ones. If we differ on the subject of the marriage laws, I at least can believe of you that you cleave to what you believe to be good; and I don't know of anything in the nature of your views that should prevent you from believing the same of me. *How far* we differ I think we neither of us know, for I am ignorant of your precise views; and, apparently, you attribute to me both feelings and opinions which are not mine. We cannot set each other quite right in this matter in letters, but one thing I can tell you in few words. Light and easily broken ties are what I neither desire theoretically nor could live for practically. Women who are satisfied with such ties do *not* act as I have done. That any unworldly, unsuperstitious person who is sufficiently acquainted with the realities of life can pronounce my relation to Mr. Lewes immoral, I can only understand by remembering how subtile and complex are the influences that mould opinion. But I *do* remember this: and I indulge in no arrogant or uncharitable thoughts about those who condemn us, even though we might have expected a somewhat different verdict. From the majority of persons, of course, we never looked for anything but condemnation. We are leading no life of self-indulgence, except, indeed, that, being happy in each other, we find everything easy. We are working hard to provide for others better than we provide for ourselves, and to fulfil every responsibility that lies upon us. Levity and pride would not be a sufficient basis for that. Pardon me if, in vindicating myself from some unjust conclusions, I seem too cold and self-asserting. I should not care to vindicate myself if I did not love you and desire to relieve you of the pain which you say these conclusions have given you. Whatever I may have misinterpreted before, I do not misinterpret your letter this morning, but read in it nothing else than love and kindness towards me, to which my heart fully answers yes. I should like never to write about my self again; it is not healthy to dwell on one's own feelings and conduct,

but only to try and live more faithfully and lovingly each fresh day. I think not one of the endless words and deeds of kindness and forbearance you have ever shown me has vanished from my memory. I recall them often, and feel, as about everything else in the past, how deficient I have been in almost every relation of my life. But that deficiency is irrevocable, and I can find no strength or comfort except in "pressing forward towards the things that are before," and trying to make the present better than the past. But if we should never be very near each other again, dear Cara, do bear this faith in your mind, that I was not insensible or ungrateful to all your goodness, and that I am one among the many for whom you have not lived in vain. I am very busy just now, and have been obliged to write hastily. Bear this in mind, and believe that no meaning is mine which contradicts my assurance that I am your affectionate and earnest friend.

[Æt. 37] MATTHEW ARNOLD
1822–1888

To Miss Arnold

[TENNYSON "DEFICIENT IN INTELLECTUAL POWER"]

2 Chester Square, December 17, 1860.

. . . I have at last got the Commissioner's distinct leave to publish my Report, with additions, as a book. It will appear in February. By the time you come I hope to have finished the introduction to that and to have got it printed, and to be well plunged in the Middle Age. I have a strong sense of the irrationality of that period, and of the utter folly of those who take it seriously, and play at restoring it; still, it has poetically the greatest charm and refreshment possible for me. The fault I find with Tennyson in his *Idylls of the King* is that the peculiar charm and aroma of the Middle Age he does not give in them. There is something magical about it, and I will do something with it before I have done. The real truth is that Tennyson, with all his temperament and artistic skill, is deficient in intellectual power; and no

modern poet can make very much of his business unless he is pre-eminently strong in this. Goethe owes his grandeur to his strength in this, although it even hurt his poetical operations by its immense predominance. However, it would not do for me to say this about Tennyson, though gradually I mean to say boldly the truth about a great many English celebrities, and begin with Ruskin in these lectures on Homer. I have been reading a great deal in the *Iliad* again lately, and though it is too much to say, as the writer in the *Biographie Universelle* says, that "None but an Englishman would dream of matching Shakespeare with the Greeks," yet it is true that Homer leaves him with all his unequalled gift—and certainly there never was any such naturally gifted poet—as far behind as perfection leaves imperfection.

[Æt. 38]

To his Mother

[THE WHITE HORSE VALE; CUMNOR]

OXFORD, May 14, 1861.

My dearest Mother,—

I have to thank you for two letters—a long one, and a note returning a letter (of no importance) of a Russian count who had been sent with a letter to me. This is the first summer, or, indeed, spring day. The wind changed in the night, and to-day it is south-west, with the lights and airs as they only can be with the wind in that quarter in May, and spring coming on in its glory over all the country. One long, rigid succession of black north-east winds we have had, lasting even through the rain of Saturday and Sunday. I thought they would never end, and was really depressed by them. Even this country I am so fond of looked forbidding, and the flowers themselves were no pleasure. However, the change has come at last. About old May Day (yesterday) they say one may always look for fine weather, and the rain, ungenial as it was, has wetted the ground and vegetation so thoroughly that now the warmth has come there is yet no sensation of dryness. I have been at Wantage to-day—King Alfred's birthplace. A wonderful, quiet

old Berkshire town, in the White Horse Vale at the foot of the downs. I started by the half-past seven train this morning, and then drove four miles from Farringdon Road. The Vale is nearly all grass fields, with trees in a park-like way about them, and every village quite clustered round with elms; and the line of the downs bounding it all has great character, and has always been a favourite object with me. Presently I am going to my old haunts among the Cumnor hills, and shall come back with plenty of orchises and blue-bells. I left Wantage at half-past twelve, and am back here by two, having had a biscuit and some mulled claret at Didcot. Getting back so early is one's reward for getting up early. I am wonderfully changed about that, now that without the slightest effort I get up at six, and walk down more than half a mile to take the early train at half-past seven. It is a great thing in my favour (and that advantage I have always had) that I am utterly indifferent about the time of my breakfast, and can wait for it till such time as it pleases Providence to send it me. I always like this place, and the intellectual life here is certainly much more intense than it used to be; but this has its disadvantages too, in the envies, hatreds, and jealousies that come with the activity of mind of most men. Goldwin Smith, whose attack on Stanley's Edinburgh article has made much noise, is a great element of bitterness and strife, though personally a most able, in some respects even interesting, man; the result is that all the world here seems more perturbed and exacerbated than of old. If I was disposed to fly for refuge to the country and its sights and sounds against the rather humdrum life which prevailed here in old times, how much more am I disposed to do this now, convinced as I am that irritations and envyings are not only negatively injurious to one's spirit, like dulness, but positively and actively. . . .

Your ever affectionate,

M. A.

[Æt. 40]

To his Mother

["though bold, never paradoxical"]

The Athenæum, October 13, 1863.

My dearest Mother,—

I will write to-day, as I am not sure of to-morrow, but I hope that we shall still keep, as far as possible, our old days for writing. What a happy time we had at Fox How, and what a delightful recollection I have, and shall long have, of you with the children, particularly with the two dear little girls! Habit reconciles one to everything, but I am not yet by any means reconciled to the change from our Fox How life to our life here. Breakfast is particularly dismal, when I come into the dining-room to find nobody, instead of finding you, to look out on the whity-brown road and houses of the square, instead of looking into Fairfield, and to eat my breakfast without hearing any letters read aloud by Fan. At this time of year I have a particular liking for the country, and the weather on Sunday and yesterday was so beautiful that it made me quite restless to be off again. To-day it is raining, and that composes me a little. I send you a note of Lady de Rothschild's, which you may burn. The *Westminster* article she was the first to tell me of. I must send it you. It is a contrast (all in my favour) of me with Ruskin. It is the strongest pronunciamento on my side there has yet been; almost too strong for my liking, as it may provoke a feeling against me. The reviewer says, "Though confident, Mr. Arnold is never self-willed; though bold, he is never paradoxical." Tell Fan to remember this in future when she plays croquêt with me. I also keep it as a weapon against K., who said to me that I was becoming as dogmatic as Ruskin. I told her the difference was that Ruskin was "dogmatic and *wrong*," and here is this charming reviewer who comes to confirm me.

My love to dear Fan, and thanks for her note; love too to dear old Susy.—Your ever most affectionate

M. A.

[Æt. 41]

To his Mother

["but of this inward spring one must not talk"]

The Athenæum, London,
December 24, 1863.

My dearest Mother,—

Business first. I am delighted with the wooden platter and bread knife, for which articles I have long had a fancy; the platter too I like all the better for not having an inscription, only a border of corn ears. Dear Rowland's book has not yet come. Thank her for it all the same, and tell her I will write to her when I receive it. And thank dear K. for her letter, and dear Fan for her note, and receive all my thanks for your own, my dearest mother.

While writing these last words I have heard the startling news of the sudden death of Thackeray. He was found dead in his bed this morning. If you have not seen it in the newspapers before you read this, you will all be greatly startled and shocked, as I am. I have heard no particulars. I cannot say that I thoroughly liked him, though we were on friendly terms; and he is not, to my thinking, a great writer. Still, this sudden cessation of an existence so lately before one's eyes, so vigorous and full of life, and so considerable a power in the country, is very sobering, if, indeed, after the shock of a fortnight ago, one still needs sobering. To-day I am forty-one, the middle of life, in any case, and for me, perhaps, much more than the middle. I have ripened, and am ripening so slowly, that I shall be glad of as much time as possible, yet I can feel, I rejoice to say, an inward spring which seems more and more to gain strength, and to promise to resist outward shocks, if they must come, however rough. But of this inward spring one must not talk, for it does not like being talked about, and threatens to depart if one will not leave it in mystery. . . .

My love to all at Fox How on Christmas Day.

Your ever most affectionate
M. A.

[Æt. 60]

To Miss Arnold
[impressions of america]

The St. Botolph Club,
85 Boylston Street, Boston,
November 8, 1883.

My dearest Fan,—

Here is Thursday, and my Sunday letter has not yet been written; but you have heard from Flu, and she will have given you some notion of what our life here is. I hope, however, to write once in every week to you. I wrote last from New York, before my first lecture. I was badly heard, and many people were much disappointed; but they remained to the end, were perfectly civil and attentive, and applauded me when I had done. It made me doubtful about going on with the lecturing, however, as I felt I could not maintain a louder pitch of voice than I did in Chickering Hall, where I lectured, and some of the American Halls are much larger. There is a good deal to be learned as to the management of the voice, however, and I have set myself to learn it, though I am old to begin; the kindness of the people here makes everything easier, as they are determined to like one. The strength of the feeling about papa, here in New England especially, would gratify you; and they have been diligent readers of my books for years. The number of people whom, somehow or other, I reach here is what surprises me. Imagine General Grant calling at the *Tribune* Office to thank them for their good report of the main points of my lecture, as he had thought the line taken so very important, but had heard imperfectly! Now I should not have suspected Grant of either knowing or caring anything whatever about me and my productions. Last night I gave my New York lecture here. The hall was crammed, but it only holds 900, where the New York hall holds 1300; I had refused to try a bigger hall here. I was introduced by Dr. Oliver W. Holmes, a dear little old man, and perfectly heard. I spoke much better than at New York, and shall improve still further, I hope. Holmes told me he could not have believed such an audience could have been gathered for a lecture in the heat of their election of a Governor for the State of Massa-

chusetts; and he said also that he had never seen such attention and interest. We went from New York to Mr. Charles Butler at Fox Meadow—a beautiful old character with a delightful daughter. Lyulph Stanley sent us to him. From him we went to the Delanos, 90 miles up the Hudson. She was a Miss Astor, and it was like staying with the Rothschilds. All along the Hudson it is like the rich and finished villas along the Thames by Richmond. We came here on Monday night. Next week we shall be paying visits, but we shall be on and off here for a month to come. Imagine my getting a cordial letter from Louis Claude, entreating me "as an old Ambleside boy" to come and visit him somewhere out on the way to St. Paul. I have also heard from a Mr. Newberry, son of an old Laleham pupil of whom you have heard mamma speak; he remembers me as a little child, and wants to come and see me. I have scores of interesting things of this kind to tell you, but must stop now. We dine to-night with Norton at Cambridge; on Saturday we go to Newport.—Your ever affectionate

M. A.

[Æt. 60]

To Miss Arnold

[emerson; amherst]

Somerset Club, Boston,
Saturday, December 8, 1883.

My dearest Fan,—

I do not think I have yet let a week pass, from Sunday to Sunday, without writing to you, and I will not do so now, for in your last letter of 20th November you complained of having been long without a letter. This was owing to the bad passages the ships have been making. I am driven hard as usual. Yesterday I left Flu with the Pages here, the Wordsworths' friends, and took the eleven o'clock train to Amherst, a hundred and twenty miles from Boston, and the seat of a university. In the train Jane's letter and a charming note from Miss Emerson were brought to me. Miss Emerson wrote to say that she found not a word in the lecture on her father to give her pain. However, I am not going to read that lecture at Concord—it is too much of a literary criticism.

Many here object to my not having praised Emerson all round, but that was impossible. I have given him praise which in England will be thought excessive, probably; but then I have a very, very deep feeling for him. One hears so much of him here, and what one hears is so excellent, that Flu and Lucy, who really know nothing about him, have become quite attached to him. Well, I was saying that I went to Amherst yesterday. I got there about three. It is a pretty village near the Connecticut River, with picturesque lines of hill in the landscape. I found the President of the University, with whom I stayed, had dined at twelve, thinking I should dine "on board" the train, as they say here. However, I said a lunch of bread and butter and tea would do perfectly for me, and then we went a walk into the country, and at six we sat down to tea—the President (who is a widower), his three daughters, and a favourite student, who perhaps is going to marry one of the daughters. At tea we had exquisite rolls, broiled oysters, and preserved peaches —nothing else—and iced water or tea to wash it down. For once, this suits me perfectly well. I had a great dinner with Phillips Brooks—venison and champagne—the day before. Then we walked up to the chapel where the lecture was. We had 650 people, the place quite full, and I spoke well. Then we walked back, and had a supper of apples and pears (excellent), sponge cakes and chocolate. I went to bed soon after ten, for at half-past five I had to get up to catch a train at a quarter to seven. The daughters like early rising, and all breakfasted with me. A porridge made of split oat groats, which I am beginning to like (one takes it with cream), a roll, and a cup of tea did for me very well. There was an immense beef steak, but that was too much for me so early. Since I got here I have been shaved, had my letters, seen my agents, and am now going to the Pages to pick up Flu. We go down to Haverhill for Sunday—an exquisite place, belonging to a man called Sanders, who has made a great fortune by the telephone. I had been there before, and they wanted me to bring Flu. She will be very comfortable, and they will drive us after church to-morrow to see what Washington pronounced the most beautiful view in New England. Your ever affectionate

M. A.

To John Tyndall

[a visit to vesúvius]

Hotel de Grande Bretagne, Naples,
March 31, 1872.

My dear Tyndall,—

Your very welcome letter did not reach me until the 18th of March, when I returned to Cairo from my expedition to Assouan. Like Johnny Gilpin, I "little thought, when I set out, of running such a rig"; but while at Cairo I fell in with Ossory of the Athenæum, and a very pleasant fellow, Charles Ellis, who had taken a dahabieh, and were about to start up the Nile. They invited me to take possession of a vacant third cabin, and I accepted their hospitality, with the intention of going as far as Thebes and returning on my own hook. But when we got to Thebes I found there was no getting away again without much more exposure and fatigue than I felt justified in facing just then, and as my friends showed no disposition to be rid of me, I stuck to the boat, and only left them on the return voyage at Rodu, which is the terminus of the railway, about 150 miles from Cairo.

We had an unusually quick journey, as I was little more than a month away from Cairo, and as my companions made themselves very agreeable, it was very pleasant. I was not particularly well at first, but by degrees the utter rest of this "always afternoon" sort of life did its work, and I am as well and vigorous now as ever I was in my life. . . .

Egypt interested me profoundly, but I must reserve the tale of all I did and saw there for word of mouth. From Alexandria I went to Messina, and thence made an excursion along the lovely Sicilian coast to Catania and Etna. The old giant was half covered with snow, and this fact, which would have tempted you to go to the top, stopped me. But I went to the Val del Bove, whence all the great lava streams have flowed for the last two cen-

turies, and feasted my eyes with its rugged grandeur. From Messina I came on here, and had the great good fortune to find Vesuvius in eruption. Before this fact the vision of good Bence Jones forbidding much exertion vanished into thin air, and on Thursday up I went in company with Ray Lankester and my friend Dohrn's father, Dohrn himself being unluckily away. We had a glorious day, and did not descend till late at night. The great crater was not very active, and contented itself with throwing out great clouds of steam and volleys of red-hot stones now and then. These were thrown towards the south-west side of the cone, so that it was practicable to walk all round the northern and eastern lip, and look down into the Hell Gate. I wished you were there to enjoy the sight as much as I did. No lava was issuing from the great crater, but on the north side of this, a little way below the top, an independent cone had established itself as the most charming little pocket-volcano imaginable. It could not have been more than 100 feet high, and at the top was a crater not more than six or seven feet across. Out of this, with a noise exactly resembling a blast furnace and a slowly-working high pressure steam engine combined, issued a violent torrent of steam and fragments of semi-fluid lava as big as one's fist, and sometimes bigger. These shot up sometimes as much as 100 feet, and then fell down on the sides of the little crater, which could be approached within fifty feet without any danger. As darkness set in, the spectacle was most strange. The fiery stream found a lurid reflection in the slowly-drifting steam cloud, which overhung it, while the red-hot stones which shot through the cloud shone strangely beside the quiet stars in a moonless sky. . . .

Courage, my friend, behold land! I know you love my handwriting. I am off to Rome to-day, and this day-week, if all goes well, I shall be under my own roof-tree again. In fact I hope to reach London on Saturday evening. It will be jolly to see your face again.—Ever yours faithfully,

T. H. Huxley.

[Æt. 34] FITZ-JAMES O'BRIEN

1828–1862

To a Friend

[from a soldier's death-bed]

[April, 1862]

. . . I gave up the ghost and told him to go ahead. There were about twelve surgeons to witness the operation. All my shoulder bone and a portion of my upper arm have been taken away. I nearly died. My breath ceased, heart ceased to beat, pulse stopped. However, I got through. I am not yet out of danger from the operation, but a worse disease has set in. I have got tetanus, or lock-jaw. There is a chance of my getting out of it, that's all. In case I don't, good-by old fellow, with all my love! I don't want to make any legal document, but I desire that you and Frank Wood should be my literary executors, because after I'm dead I may turn out a bigger man than when living. I'd write more if I could, but I'm very weak. Write to me. I may be alive. Also get Wood to write.

[Æt. 41] DANTE GABRIEL ROSSETTI

1828–1882

To William Rossetti

["recovering my lost mss."]

13 October, 1869.

My dear William,—

I wished last night to speak to you on a subject which however I find it necessary to put in writing. I am very anxious to know your view of it, and to remind you beforehand that no mistrust or unbrotherly feeling could possibly have caused my silence till now.

Various friends have long hinted from time to time at the possibility of recovering my lost MSS., and when I was in Scotland last year Scott particularly referred to it. Some months ago Howell of his own accord entered on the matter, and offered to take all the execution of it on himself. This for some time I still hung back from

accepting; but eventually I yielded, and the thing was done, after some obstacles, on Wednesday or Thursday last, I forget which. An order had first to be obtained from the Home Secretary, who strangely enough is an old and rather intimate acquaintance of my own—H. A. Bruce. . . . All in the coffin was found quite perfect; but the book, though not in any way destroyed, is soaked through and through, and had to be still further saturated with disinfectants. It is now in the hands of the medical man who was associated with Howell in the disinterment, and who is carefully drying it leaf by leaf. There seems reason to fear that some minor portion is obliterated, but I most hope this may not prove to be the most important part. I shall not, I believe, be able to see it for at least a week yet.

I trust you will not—but I know you cannot—think that I showed any want of confidence in not breaking this painful matter to you before its issue. It was a service I could not ask you to perform for me, nor do I know any one except Howell who could well have been entrusted with such a trying task. It was necessary, as we found, that a lawyer should be employed in the matter, to speak to the real nature of the MSS., as difficulties were raised to the last by the Cemetery Authorities as to their possibly being papers the removal of which involved a fraud. . . .

[Æt. 44]

To his Mother

[disciplining a dog]

Kelmscott, Lechlade,
27 March, 1873.

My dearest Mother,—

I hear with great anxiety from Maria that you have been suffering from an attack of influenza, and that you are still in bed. I hope Maria will continue to let me know regularly how you are. I trust, however, that the next news may be decidedly favourable. . . .

I am meaning to dedicate to you the new edition of my *Italian Poets*. The first was dedicated to poor Lizzy, and I had some thought of retaining the dedication with

date; but, this seeming perhaps rather forced, I shall substitute your dear name in the second edition.

Hoping to hear a better account soon,

I am ever
Your most loving Son,
D. Gabriel R.

P.S.—I must really tell you about Dizzy, George's dog. Some evenings back he was lying by the fire in my studio, when George, who was going to bed, roused him to accompany him, as he generally does. Dizzy, however, was unwilling to quit the fire, and at last got so nasty and wicked that he bit George in the thumb. He was then locked up for the night in the coldest place that could be found.

In the morning he trotted into the breakfast-room as usual, but was received with shouts of obloquy, upon which he turned tail at once and fled. At dinner the same day he reappeared; whereupon we tied him to the leg of the piano, and had in another dog who is here, called Turvy. We set a plate just out of Dizzy's reach, and fed Turvy with three successive helps of beef and macaroni, between each of which Dizzy's feelings found vent in "voci alte e fioche." After this Turvy was much caressed, and every now and then left us, to walk leisurely round Dizzy and survey him as an accessory deserving of passing notice. Dizzy has been a convict ever since, and knows it. This morning, on entering the breakfast-room, I found him rolled up on the mat before the fire, and, being occupied with other things, for the moment forgot his position. On my appearance, he raised his head in doubt, but, when I sat down and said nothing, he let his head drop again on the mat with an air of luxurious relief. This served as a reminder, and I shrieked, "What, not Dizzy!" in such tones that he arose in a moment and fled to the shades with an expression of anguish which cannot be described. I think the ban will soon have to be taken off him now. At present the only relaxation is that he is allowed to accompany us in our walks, but without recognition from us. One only has to show one's thumb to him, and his sins fall back on his head in a moment, and drive him into solitude.

[Æt. 34] GEORGE MEREDITH
1828–1909

To William Hardman

["tuck" disappoints]

May 2, 1862.

Such Weather.
And at Copsham no Tuck!
Anathema!
Spoken by the poet on receiving
Tuck's
Card: May 2nd, 1862.

"May his company find him utterly dull, and he his company!

"May he hear good things and not comprehend them!

"May he long in anguish to laugh, and when the laugh comes, may he forget the cause thereof, and go seeking for it, for the remainder of his years, with the aspect of such a seeker!

"May Demitroïa exclaim, 'I am of a different opinion from William'!!!"

(Climax attained.)
(Close of Anathema.)

Went to Exhibition on opening Day with Borthwick. Crush. Saw everything. . . . Dined with Morison and Hicks, and drank Hocks, etc. Anticipated seeing you, cock-certain, to-morrow. Will never believe your cock-certain again!—Book* to be delivered this evening or to-morrow. Has subscribed wonderfully well. In spite of all.—Your loving

George M.

* *Poems and Ballads.*

[Æt. 34]

To William Hardman
["asparagus is ripe"]

Copsham, May 5, 1862.

Madrigal
"Since Tuck is faithless found"

Since Tuck is faithless found, no more
I'll trust to man or maid;
I'll sit me down, a hermit hoar,
Alone in Copsham shade.

The sight of all I shun;
Far-spying from the mound;
I'll be at home no more,
Since Tuck,
Since Tu-a tu-a tu-a
Tuia Tuck,
Since Tuck is faithless found.

Oh! what a glorious day. I have done lots of Emilia,* and am now off to Ripley, or St. Demitroïa hill, or Tuck's Height, carolling. I snap my fingers at you. And yet, dear Tuck, what would I give to have you here. The gorse is all ablaze, the meadows are glorious—green, humming all day. Nightingales throng. Heaven, blessed blue amorous Heaven is hard at work upon our fair, wanton, darling old naughty Mother Earth.

Come, dear Tuck, and quickly, or I must love a woman, and be ruined. Answer me, grievous man!

In thine ear!—Asparagus is ripe at Ripley. In haste. —Your constantly loving friend, George M.

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* *Emilia in England*, now called *Sandra Belloni*.

[Æt. 36]

To the Rev. Augustus Jessopp
["little writers should be realistic"]

Sept. 20, 1864.

My dear Jessopp,—

As to the Poems: I don't think the age prosaic for not buying them. A man who hopes to be popular, must think from the mass, and as the heart of the mass. If he follows out vagaries of his own brain, he cannot hope for general esteem; and he does smaller work. "Modern Love" as a dissection of the sentimental passion of these days, could only be apprehended by the few who would read it many times. I have not looked for it to succeed. Why did I write it?—Who can account for pressure? . . .

Between realism and idealism there is no natural conflict. This completes that. Realism is the basis of good composition: it implies study, observation, artistic power, and (in those who can do more) humility. Little writers should be realistic. They would then at least do solid work. They afflict the world because they will attempt that it is given to none but noble workmen to achieve. A great genius must necessarily employ ideal means, for a vast conception cannot be placed bodily before the eye, and remains to be suggested. Idealism is as an atmosphere whose effects of grandeur are wrought out through a series of illusions, that are illusions to the sense within us only when divorced from the groundwork of the real. Need there be exclusion, the one of the other? The artist is incomplete who does this. Men to whom I bow my head (Shakespeare, Goethe; and in their way, Molière, Cervantes) are Realists au fond. But they have the broad arms of Idealism at command. They give us Earth; but it is earth with an atmosphere. One may find as much amusement in a Kaleidoscope as in a merely idealistic writer: and, just as sound prose is of more worth than pretentious poetry, I hold the man who gives a plain wall of fact higher in esteem than one who is constantly shuffling the clouds and dealing with airy, delicate sentimentalities, headless and tailless imaginings, despising our good, plain strength.

Does not all science (the mammoth balloon, to wit) tell

us that when we forsake earth, we reach up to a frosty, inimical Inane? For my part I love and cling to earth, as the one piece of God's handiwork which we possess. I admit that we can refashion; but of earth must be the material.—Yours faithful,

GEORGE MEREDITH.

[Æt. 36]

To MISS J—— H——

[REJECTING A NOVEL]

193 PICCADILLY, LONDON, W., Nov. 22, 1864.

The chief fault in your stories is the redundancy of words which overlays them; and the chief hope visible in them is the copious youthful feeling running throughout. Your characters do not speak the language of nature, and this is specially to be charged against them when they are under strong excitement and should most do so. Nor are the characters very originally conceived, though there is good matter in the Old Welshman C. Rees. Your defect at present lies in your raw feeling. Time will cure this, if you will get the habit of looking resolutely at the thing you would pourtray, instead of exclaiming about it and repeating yourself without assisting the reader on in any degree. We* certainly think that you are a hopeful writer, and possibly we have been enough outspoken to encourage you to believe us sincere in saying so.

To MISS J—— H——

["LEARN TO DESTROY REMORSELESSLY"]

193 PICCADILLY, LONDON, W.

Madam,—

You speak of the exclamatory style as being, you think, essentially and naturally feminine. If you will look at the works of the writer of "Adam Bede," you will see that she, the greatest of female writers, manifests nothing of the sort. It is simply a quality of youth, and you by undertaking to study will soon tame your style. Inter*

* Meredith was for several years literary adviser to Chapman and Hall.

jections are commonly a sign of raw thought, and of vagrant emotion:—a literary hysteria to which women may be more subject than men; but they can talk in another tongue, let us hope. We are anxious that you should not be chagrined by any remarks that we have made. There is real promise in your work: but remember that the best fiction is fruit of a well-trained mind. If hard study should kill your creative effort, it will be no loss to the world or to you. And if, on the contrary the genius you possess should survive the process of mental labour, it will be enriched and worthy of a good rank. But do not be discouraged by what we say; and do not listen to the encomiums of friends. Read the English of the Essayists; read de Stendhal (Henri Beyle) in French; Heinrich Zschokke in German (minor tales). Learn to destroy your literary offspring remorselessly until you produce one that satisfies your artistic feeling.

[Æt. 44]

To Arthur G. Meredith

["LET NOTHING FLOUT YOUR SENSE OF A SUPREME BEING"]

Box Hill, Dorking, Surrey,
England, April 25, 1872.

My dear Arthur,—

. . . Strong friendships and intercommunications with foreigners will refresh your life in this island, and the Germans are solid. Stick to a people not at the mercy of their impulses, and besides a people with so fine a literature must be worthy of love.—Captain Maxse wrote to me the other day about an examination in the Foreign Office for the post of Chinese interpreter—for you: if successful to go out to China with a salary of £200 per annum and learn the Chinese tongue of li-ro and fo-ki. I declined it: I hope I was right. I felt sure that it would be repugnant to you to spend your life in China, where the climate is hard, society horrid, life scarcely (to my thought) endurable. Perhaps you might have chosen Japan. But it would have been for very many years perpetual banishment. Let me hear what you think of it.—Study Cicero carefully. He is a fine moralist, a

friend of scholars, a splendid trainer for a public life of any serious and exalted ambition.—What you say of our religion is what thoughtful men feel: and that you at the same time can recognise its moral value, is matter of rejoicing to me. The Christian teaching is sound and good: the ecclesiastical dogma is an instance of the poverty of humanity's mind hitherto, and has often in its hideous fangs and claws shown whence we draw our descent.—Don't think that the obscenities mentioned in the Bible do harm to children. The Bible is outspoken upon facts, and rightly. It is because the world is pruriently and stupidly shamefaced that it cannot come in contact with the Bible without convulsions. I agree with the Frommen that the book should be read out, for Society is a wanton hypocrite, and I would accommodate her in nothing: though for the principle of Society I hold that men should be ready to lay down their lives. Belief in the religion has done and does this good to the young; it floats them through the perilous sensual period when the animal appetites most need control and transmutation. If you have not the belief, set yourself to love virtue by understanding that it is your best guide both as to what is due to others and what is for your positive personal good. If your mind honestly rejects it, you must call on your mind to supply its place from your own resources. Otherwise you will have only half done your work, and that is always mischievous. Pray attend to my words on this subject. You know how Socrates loved Truth. Virtue and Truth are one. Look for the truth in everything, and follow it, and you will then be living justly before God. Let nothing flout your sense of a Supreme Being, and be certain that your understanding wavers whenever you chance to doubt that he leads to good. We grow to good as surely as the plant grows to the light. The school has only to look through history for a scientific assurance of it. And do not lose the habit of praying to the unseen Divinity. Prayer for worldly goods is worse than fruitless, but prayer for strength of soul is that passion of the soul which catches the gift it seeks.—Your loving father,

George Meredith.

[Æt. 46]

To Captain Maxse
[a parson-pigeon]

Box Hill, August 15, 1874.

My dear Fred,—

I write so that you may not be disappointed of a letter at Meyringen, and good morning to you on your way to the Bel Alp! I am finishing a poem, "The Nuptials of Attila"—about forty pages: Jacob at my foot, an accustomed pigeon on the window-sill, bees below humming over some droppings of honeycomb just taken from them. This is pastoral and should content me, yet I wish I were with you, in sight of the Alps. Zürich I don't much care for, yet to be at Zürich would enrapture me.—Why should you return!—Now I look at my pigeon fronting me, I remark that he is amazingly like a parson. He is on one leg, asleep, his beak in breast, all his feathers oddly ruffled to swell his size, and an eye turned on me like the eye of Falstaff heeling over with excess of Sherris. Say, a Bishop.—When I was staying with my wife's sister last June we dined one evening with the rector of the place. He said to me: "Do you think it true that there is a portrait of Jesus Christ extant?"—"Of Nazareth?" said I. He blinked faintly like my sleepy pigeon. "Certainly of Nazareth."—"Oh! no, then," said I. "But it is affirmed that there is an authentic portrait of the Virgin his Mother." "Could one trust it?" he asked me with a supplication in the tone. "Decidedly not," said I. He was (to make use of one of their distinctions) High Church. One may be high and not see far. And now good-night, Fred. Write from Bel Alp.—Where you will also be high and not see so far as me, I dare say.—Your envious

George M.

[Æt. 50]

To R. L. Stevenson

[praise and blame; henley]

Box Hill, Dorking, June 4, 1878.

My dear Stevenson,—

I had not time to write to you immediately after reading the book,* but my impressions are fresh. My wife has gained possession of it at last, so I should have to run down to the house to quote correctly. She fell on the book, I snatched it, she did the same, but I regaining it, cut the pages, constituting an act of ownership. I leave this to her invariably, so she was impressed and abandoned the conflict. I have been fully pleased. The writing is of the rare kind which is naturally simple yet picked and choice. It is literature. The eye on land and people embraces both, and does not take them up in bits. I have returned to the reading and shall again. The reflections wisely tickle, they are in the right good tone of philosophy interwrought with humour.

My protest is against the Preface and the final page. The Preface is keenly in Osric's vein—"everything you will, dear worthy public, but we are exceeding modest and doubt an you will read us, though exquisitely silken-calved we are, and could say a word of ourselves, yet on seeing our book, were we amazed at our littleness, indeed and truly, my lord Public!" As for the closing page, it is rank recreancy. "Yes, Mr. Barlow," said Tommy, "I have travelled abroad, under various mishaps, to learn in the end that the rarest adventures are those one does not go forth to seek." "My very words to him," said Mr. Barlow to himself, at the same time presenting Tommy with a guinea piece.—This last page is quite out of tone with the spirit of the book.

I remember [in] "On the Oise," you speak of the river hurrying on, "never pausing to take breath." This, and a touch of excess in dealing with the reeds, whom you deprive of their beauty by overinforming them with your sensations, I feel painfully to be levelled at the Saxon head. It is in the style of Dickens.

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* *An Inland Voyage.*

But see what an impression I have of you when these are the sole blots I discover by my lively sensations in the perusal.

Should you be in communication with Mr. Henley, I beg you will convey to him my sense of the honour he does me by giving so much attention to my work. I, who have worked for many years not supposing that any one paid much heed to me, find it extraordinary. His praise is high indeed, but happily he fetches me a good lusty clout o' the head now and again, by which I am surprisingly well braced and my balance is restored. Otherwise praise like that might operate as the strong waters do upon the lonely savage unused to such a rapture.

You should see the foliage of our valley. Come you to London on your way to the Continent, you must give us a visit. Whither do you go? How is the mood for work with you? In August I believe I am bound for Dauphiné, where a French brother-in-law of my wife, a militaire, has a pied à terre on the borders of Savoy. I am rather more in the mood for South Tyrol, but the invitation attracts, and Dauphiné has heights enough. My "Egoist" is on the way to a conclusion. Of pot-boilers let none speak. Jove hangs them upon necks that could soar above his heights but for the accursed weight.

Adieu. I trust you are well. Look to health. Run to no excess in writing or in anything. I hope you will feel that we expect much of you. I beg you to remember me to your father and mother.—Yours very faithfully,

GEORGE MEREDITH.

[Æt. 54]

To M. ANDRÉ RAFFALOVICH

[LESLIE STEPHEN AND "THE SUNDAY TRAMPS"]

BOX HILL, DORKING, April 8, 1882.

My dear Sir,—

I have been unable to write much. All my correspondence lies in abeyance. A friend would persuade me to go with him to Evian on the Lake of Geneva in August, and I may try the place for a few weeks, if I can put a finish to my present work. It is doubtful.

Your article on Louis Stevenson is a fair summary of

him. Leslie Stephen comes down to me three or four times in the year, with other friends forming a body calling themselves "The Sunday Tramps," who escape from the dreary London Sabbath once a fortnight and take a walk of between 20 and 30 miles. When I was in health I was of the pedestrian party. Now I have to meet them on the hills half way from home, or less. They dine with me, and start for London at 10 P.M. They are men of distinction in science or Literature; tramping with them one has the world under review, as well as pretty scenery. Leslie is acknowledged captain of the band. I have a very warm regard for him. If you remember Vernon Whitford of the "Egoist," it is a sketch of L. Stephen, but merely a sketch, not doing him full justice, though the strokes within and without are correct.—I have just put down "Numa Roumestan," an admirable piece of writing. The pictures of Provence, and the men and women of Southern blood, are astonishingly vivid. I like no other of Daudet's novels. His "Contes Choisis" are exquisite. He has real poetical quality.—Now I must come to an end.

Believe me, your most faithful
GEORGE MEREDITH.

[Æt. 54]

To M. ANDRÉ RAFFALOVICH

[CARLYLE AND HIS WIFE; STEVENSON]

BOX HILL, DORKING,
May 23, 1882.

My dear Sir,—

Your article on Th. Carlyle's "Reminiscences" was prompted, I think, rather by enthusiasm for the lady who stands close and in contrast with him, than by an accurate knowledge of his works, nature, and teaching. Our people over here have been equally unjust, with less excuse. You speak of vanity, as a charge against him. He has little, though he certainly does not err on the side of modesty:—he knew his powers. The harsh judgment he passed on the greater number of his contemporaries came from a very accurate perception of them, as they were perused by the intense light of the man's personal

sincereness. He was one who stood constantly in the presence of those "Eternal verities" of which he speaks. For the shallow men of mere literary aptitude he had perforce contempt. The spirit of the prophet was in him. —Between him and his wife the case is quite simple. She was a woman of peculiar conversational sprightliness, and such a woman longs for society. To him, bearing that fire of sincereness, as I have said, society was unendurable. All coming near him, except those who could bear the trial, were scorched, and he was as much hurt as they by the action rousing the flames in him. Moreover, like all truthful souls, he was an artist in his work. The efforts after verification of matters of fact, and to present things distinctly in language, were incessant; they cost him his health, swallowed up his leisure. Such a man could hardly be an agreeable husband for a woman of the liveliest vivacity. But that is not a reason for your passing condemnation on him. Study well his writings. I knew them both. She did me the honour to read my books, and make him listen to extracts, and he was good enough to repeat that "the writer thereof was no fool"—high praise from him. They snapped at one another, and yet the basis of affection was mutually firm. She admired, he respected, and each knew the other to be honest. Only she needed for her mate one who was more a citizen of the world, and a woman of the placid disposition of Milton's Eve, framed by her master to be an honest labourer's cook and housekeeper, with a nervous system resembling a dumpling, would have been enough for him.—He was the greatest of the Britons of his time—and after the British fashion of not coming near perfection; Titanic, not Olympian: a heaver of rocks, not a shaper. But if he did no perfect work, he had Aghtning's power to strike out marvellous pictures and reach to the inmost of men with a phrase.

We had Mr. Louis Stevenson in our Valley, staying with his wife and father and mother at the inn. He dined with me several evenings, and talked of you. We speculated on the impression produced by his costume de Bohême, which he seems to have adopted for good—an innocent eccentricity at any rate.

My thanks are due to you for your articles on my works.

Pardon me if I do not correspond regularly. I am compelled to shun writing as much as possible, and scarcely hope to be of much in the world until I have gone through some course of water-cure for unstrung nerves. They tell me that good douches are to be had at Evian, and I rather decide to go thither at the end of July, thence perhaps to the Engadine or the South Tyrol Dolomites, if my ancient talent for walking should be restored. You, who have youth, take my warning not to undermine it with the pick and blasting powder of pen and ink.—I am, with warmest greetings to you, your most faithful and obliged,

GEORGE MEREDITH.

[Æt. 60]

To W. E. HENLEY *

["IN HOSPITAL"]

BOX HILL, DORKING, June 1, 1888.

Dear Mr. Henley,—

The rude realism of your verses "In Hospital" has braced me. And with this breath of the darkness of life you give a note—

"Out of the night that covers me"—

which has a manful ring to clear and lift us, whatever the oppression that may have been caused. No realism frightens me. At its worst, I take it as a correction of the flimsy, to which our literature has a constant tendency to recur. Even the lowest appears to me more instructive than Byronics.—But when, out of hospital, you cry out in ecstasy of the "smell of the mud in the nostrils," you strike profoundly—beyond the critical senses.

I thank you for the volume. It has the tone of a voice in the ear—as near to life as that. You have not aimed at higher. Do so in your next effort. Meanwhile the present is a distinct achievement, beyond the powers of most.—Yours very truly,

GEORGE MEREDITH.

* For Stevenson's account of Henley "in hospital," see p. 503.

[Æt. 64]

To Mrs. Bovill

["THE SHAVING OF SHAGPAT"]

Box Hill, Dorking, August 16, 1892.

My dear Mrs. Bovill,—

Wonderful to hear that there is a woman who can read of Shagpat! I suppose he does wear a sort of allegory. But it is not as a dress-suit; rather as a dressing-gown, very loosely. And they say it signifies Humbug, and its attractiveness; while Noorna is the spiritual truth. Poor Sh. Bagarag being the ball between the two. I think I once knew more about them and the meaning, but have forgotten, and am glad to forget, seeing how abused I have been for having written the book.

I was pleased to have your letter, and shall rejoice when it is my good chance to meet you again.—Your ever faithful

George Meredith.

[Æt. 74]

To Lady Ulrica Duncombe

[A "WEIGHT OF APPREHENSION"; "DIANA"]

Box Hill, Dorking, Autumn, 1902.

. . . Haldane, staying with Riette for a couple of days, came here on Sunday, and pleased me by talking of (one) whom he appreciates, backing her in all her acts. We agreed in lamentable views of the condition and prospects of our country. People may seem astir; they are only half awake. On Thursday F. Greenwood comes, and I shall have another melancholy feast of forebodings. On no other subject am I pessimistic. I foresee a saddened heart for Ulrica reading her "Times" in days when I am insensible to buffets. For forty years I have borne this weight of apprehension. Some young men of the Universities show signs of life. G. M. Trevelyan writes for my stated approval of a new Review that will speak boldly upon England's needs and deficiencies, and be patriotic, as he implies, by taking a wider embrace than common patriotism We have to think beyond the purse and the heart if we would have them secure. Of course

I wrote the words he wanted. The lucky fellow is off by way of Tyrol to the Carpathians, and takes, he says, the Duel in the Pass, in "Vittoria," en route. How I could pray to show you the scenes of Vittoria's wanderings with Angelo Guidascarpi over the sub-Alpine heights from Brescia to Bormio, and away to Meran in the Adige valley. I was there when, though liking the Austrians, I burned for Italy. I fancy I did justice to both sides. The young poet Laurance Binyon has written to me for permission to make use of the story of Guidascarpi for a drama he has been commissioned to compose for Mrs. Patrick Campbell: prose, a harder task in English than in French. Few Englishmen can write a resonant prose dialogue that is not blatant; and when avoiding those alarms, they drop to flabbiness. It is merely to say that Style is rarely achieved here. Your literary hero, lecturing on Style, may have a different opinion. The prose in Shakespeare and in Congreve is perfect. They have always the right accent on their terminations. Apart from Drama, Swift is a great exemplar; Bolingbroke, and in his mild tea-table way, Addison, follow. Johnson and Macaulay wielded bludgeons; they had not the strength that can be supple. Gibbon could take a long stride with the leg of a dancing-master; he could not take a short one. Matthew Arnold was born from the pulpit and occupied it, and might have sermonised for all time, but that he conceived the head of the clerk below to be the sconce of the British public, and that he must drum on it with an iterated phrase perpetually to awaken understanding. However, although I consider it unlikely that I am in accord with your lecturer, I will own that I am beside the mark in addressing you upon a thing he will have handled more effectively. I dread the presentation of any of my works on the stage. Here is another American actress applying for permission to dramatise "Diana." I must let her know that Ulrica dislikes the character. Ulrica, she will say, is very English. Yet Ulrica says of herself, that she has imagination. Then she ought to be able to enter the breast of a passionate woman, a wife widowed, in love, much needing to be on her guard against the man, ready to fly with him, hating to intrigue; and while she totter in this juncture, assailed by

monetary needs, vain of her touch on political secrets, subject in a crisis to a swoon of the mind—mark that, O imaginative lady! for there are women and noble women, who stand unpractised and alone in the world, liable to these attacks, driven for the moment back on their instincts: cannot Ulrica compassionately, if not sisterly, realize the position? No, I see her affecting meditation upon it with the bosom of a rock under her balancing air, or say a person called on by his Lord to be just toward one who has impugned his creed. "She behaved basely." But she was physically and mentally unaware of the importance of the secret. "She ceases to interest me from that instant and in the comparison of her deeds, her consideration for her virtue sickens me." Better if that had broken down, by the accident of things, and obviated the other; but be charitable, and accept the good in her—"I can't." Even so the parson with the infidel. I had intended writing a lecture this time on one of the deep themes of Life, that might help to rational views. It shall come. You are not to be bothered about replying. Evidently you find it a burdensome duty. Just now with your Coronation robings and arrangements, it would task you; the reading of letters as well, till the panting fortnight after England's greatest event has gone by. I have to trust that you will bear the fatigue of the day.

GEORGE MEREDITH.

[Æt. 77]

To EDMUND GOSSE

["THE DYNASTS"]

BOX HILL, DORKING, July 2, 1905.

Dear Mr. Gosse,—

Your letter was among the pleasantest ones, and said the most to me. For you are that rare thing in our country, a critic—and the something more which is needed for the office,—or else we have a Gifford or a Jeffrey.

Hardy was here some days back. I am always glad to see him, and have regrets at his going; for the double reason, that I like him, and am afflicted by his twilight view of life. He questioned me as to "The Dynasts." I

spoke (needlessly) in favour of his continuing it now that it had a commencement. It was useless to say, as I think, that he would have made it more effective in prose, where he is more at home than in verse, though here and there he produces good stuff. Of much of Browning I could say the same.

Pray give me a chance of conversing with you some day after August.—Faithfully yours,

GEORGE MEREDITH.

[Æt. 77]

TO THE RT. HON. JOHN MORLEY

["I SHALL RETAIN MY LAUGH IN DEATH'S EAR"]

BOX HILL, DORKING, Nov. 9, 1905.

Dearest Morley,—

The thought of you as coming here with a chill on you gives me a twitch of fever. Send me word of your present state. As for me, after lying on my back three weeks, I find that I have been shipped by Tedium into the region of Doldrums, where all things droop, and Patience, like a trodden Toad, hops and yawns in the endeavour to act up to her name, under whip of Necessity. The bone seems to be mending. To-morrow a man comes to examine it by X rays. If favourable, I may hope to have the leg in plaster of Paris and say good-bye to bed by day. Had you seen the leg at first, you would have conceived a blackamoor emerging from a prize-fight. Now it is like Tommy after settling accounts at school. The accident occurred by my knocking my foot on the scullery threshold, so that I pitched forward while my foot was held and twisted.

Give my love to your wife. I have tried to be worthy of her resignation, and can imagine that I shall retain my laugh in Death's ear, for that is what our Maker prizes in men.—All yours,

GEORGE MEREDITH.

[Æt. 80]

To Mrs. Sturgis*

["the scripture moveth us"]

Box Hill, Dorking, August 20, 1908.

My Dearie,—

We have now S.west wind, fleets of white cloud and breezy foliage. But there are showers and you may have them. Be careful as to your hold of the umbrella in your dash to the Danish Pavilion, for the gusts at Overstrand are very treacherous. Several women there have been taken up, and landed below the cliffs—comfortably enough, as it chanced, but causing perturbation. One old lady, however, on her way to Church, a Mrs. Humfer (you may look for the name in the Churchyard), went aloft, and unfortunately, just on the ridge of the cliffs, her 'brella turned its sustaining cup upward and down she came, by good luck in the water. There the rescuer heard her saying, as if in response with the Minister at Lessons: "The Scripture moveth us in sundry places"; and she continued repeating it. For this reason, take my counsel, and the moment you feel the 'brella pulling, let go at once. It may save you from another surgeon. In any case, I would not have you be the talk of Cromer, and the subject of Ballads.—The news here is of Charlie Lewin's marriage, 16th Sept., at Holmbury.

George Meredith.

[Æt. 41]

CHARLES L. DODGSON (LEWIS CARROLL)

1832–1898

To a Child (Miss Gaynor Simpson)

["dancing, of my peculiar kind"]

December 27, 1873.

My dear Gaynor,—

My name is spelt with a "G," that is to say *"Dodgson."* Any one who spells it the same as that wretch (I mean of course the Chairman of Committees in the House of Commons) offends me *deeply,* and *for ever!* It is a thing

* His daughter.

I *can* forget, but *never can forgive!* If you do it again, I shall call you "'aynor." Could you live happy with such a name?

As to dancing, my dear, I *never* dance, unless I am allowed to do it *in my own peculiar way.* There is no use trying to describe it: it has to be seen to be believed. The last house I tried it in, the floor broke through. But then it was a poor sort of floor—the beams were only six inches thick, hardly worth calling beams at all: stone arches are much more sensible, when any dancing, *of my peculiar kind,* is to be done. Did you ever see the Rhinoceros, and the Hippopotamus, at the Zoölogical Gardens, trying to dance a minuet together? It is a touching sight.

Give any message from me to Amy that you think will be most likely to surprise her, and believe me,

Your affectionate friend,

LEWIS CARROLL.

[Æt. 48]

WILLIAM MORRIS

1834–1896

TO A FRIEND

[SWINBURNE]

[1882]

As to the poem,* I have made two or three attempts to read it, but have failed, not being in the mood I suppose: nothing would lay hold of me at all. This is doubtless my own fault, since it certainly did seem very fine. But, to confess and be hanged, you know I never could really sympathize with Swinburne's work; it always seemed to me to be founded on literature, not on nature. In saying this I really cannot accuse myself of any jealousy on the subject, as I think also you will not. Now I believe that Swinburne's sympathy with literature is most genuine and complete; and it is a pleasure to hear him talk about it, which he does in the best vein possible; he is most steadily enthusiastic about it. Now time was when the poetry resulting merely from this

* *Tristram of Lyonesse.*

intense study and love of literature might have been, if not the best, yet at any rate very worthy and enduring: but in these days when all the arts, even poetry, are like to be overwhelmed under the mass of material riches which civilization has made and is making more and more hastily every day; riches which the world has made indeed, but cannot use to any good purpose: in these days the issue between art, that is, the godlike part of man, and mere bestiality, is so momentous, and the surroundings of life are so stern and unplayful, that nothing can take serious hold of people, or should do so, but that which is rooted deepest in reality and is quite at first hand: there is no room for anything which is not forced out of a man of deep feeling, because of its innate strength and vision.

In all this I may be quite wrong and the lack may be in myself: I only state my opinion, I don't defend it; still less do I my own poetry.

[Æt. 60]

To Philip Webb*

["the public does not really care about them"]

Kelmscott House,
August 27th, '94.

My dear Fellow,—

A traveller once entered a western hotel in America and went up to the clerk in his box (as the custom is in that country) and ordered chicken for his dinner: the clerk, without any trouble in his face, put his hand into his desk, and drew out a derringer, wherewith he covered the newcomer and said in a calm historic voice: "Stranger, you will not have chicken, you will have hash."

This story you seem to have forgotten. So I will apply it, and say that you will have the Kelmscott books as they come out. In short you will have hash because it would upset me very much if you did not have a share in my "larx."

As to the Olaf Saga, I had forgotten what you had

* Who had remonstrated at Morris's generosity in presenting him with copies of Kelmscott books.

had; chiefly I think because I did not prize the big-paper copies much. They were done in the days of ignorance, before the Kelmscott Press was, though hard on the time when it began.

You see as to all these matters I do the books mainly for you and one or two others; the public does not really care about them a damn—which is stale. But I tell you I *want* you to have them, and finally you *shall.*

Yours affectionately,

WILLIAM MORRIS.

[Æt. 47] PHILLIPS BROOKS

1835–1893

To CHARLES D. COOPER

[IMPRESSIONS OF INDIA]

CHEDAMBARAM, [INDIA,]
February 22, 1883.

Dear Cooper,—

In case you do not know where Chedambaram is, I will tell you that it is just ten miles from Vaithisvarankoil, and it is hotter than Philadelphia in fly time. I have been celebrating the birthday of Mr. Washington by firing off bottles of soda water all the morning ever since we came in from our early visit to the wonderful pagoda which is the marvel of this beautiful but benighted heathen town. The only way to see things here in Southern India is to start at daybreak, when the country is cool and lovelier than anything you can imagine. The palm-trees are waving in the early breeze. The elephants go crushing along with painted trunks and gilded tusks. The pretty Hindu girls are drawing water at the wells under the banana groves. The naked children are frolicking in the dust of the bazaars. The old men and women are drinking their early cocoanut, and you jolt along on the straw, in your creaking bullock cart, as jolly as a rajah. So we went this morning to do homage to the false gods. Vishnu had gone off on a pilgrimage, and his shrine was empty, but Siva was at home, and the howling devotees were in the middle of the morning service. They must have been about at the second

lesson when we arrived, but, owing to the peculiar character of their language, it was not easy to make out just what stage of the morning exercises they had reached. But it didn't much matter, for immediately on our arrival the worship stopped where it was, and the officiating clergyman came forward and ridiculously presented us with a lime each, and then tried to put a garland of flowers about our Christian necks. This last attention I refused with indignation, at his making a heathen so summarily out of a respectable presbyter of the P. E. Church from Bishop Paddock's diocese. He gracefully intimated that he didn't mind my being mad, but would pocket the insult (or do whatever a fellow does who has no pocket, or indeed anything else except a dirty rag about his loins), provided I gave him the rupee which he expected all the same. While I was doing this there was a noise like seven pandemoniums outside, and soon in through the gate came a wild crowd of savages, yelling like fiends and carrying on their shoulders a great platform on which was a big brass idol all daubed with grease and hung with flowers. This was Vishnu, just returned from his sea bath, and in front of him came the craziest band of music made up of lunatics banging on tom-toms and screeching away on brazen trumpets three feet long. We saw the ugly Divinity safe in his shrine, and left the pagans yelling in their joy at getting their ugly image safely home.

By this time the sun was blazing, as I said, and we came home to the bungalow, which does duty for a tavern, and set a small Hindu to pulling away at a punkah rope at the cost of three cents a day. Then we cut up our sacred limes and poured soda water on the juice of them and made a drink which I advise you to try if ever you have to spend a hot day in Chedambaram. Then we breakfasted on rice and curry and fried bananas, and then I thought I would write to you and send you my blessing out of the depths of this Hindu darkness.

I can't tell you what a delightful thing this Indian trip has been. From the snows of the Himalayas down to these burning and luxuriant tropics, from the wonderful beauty of the exquisite Taj of the Mohammedan Em-

peror at Agra down to the grotesque splendor of this great Brahmin sanctuary which we have seen to-day, everything has been fascinating. Oh, if you and McVickar and George Strong had been with me all the way! I have had a pleasant young companion, who has behaved beautifully except when he got the smallpox in Delhi, and kept us there two weeks. But Delhi is, after all, the most interesting place in India, and if he was going to do it he could not have chosen a better place. We were guests there of some fine young English missionaries, who behaved splendidly under the affliction which we brought down upon them, and I went about with them and saw the ins and outs of missionary life which, when the right men are at it, is a splendid thing.

The hot season has set in within the last few days and we must be away, but I shall leave these gentle Hindus and their lovely land with great regret. Now we are on our way to Ceylon, and two weeks from to-day we sail from Colombo back to Suez, and then comes Spain. Are you right well, old fellow, and does the dear old study look just the way it used to do, and are you counting as much as I am the time when we shall meet again there at General Convention, and talk it all over and abuse the ——s in the dear old way?

Ever and ever yours,
P. B.

[Æt. 28]

JOHN ADDINGTON SYMONDS
1840–1893

To Henry Sidgwick
["RICHARD FEVEREL"]

[Clifton Hill House,
May 17, 1869.]

We are still exiles from our house, which is at present a chaos. The movers of my goods have lost above three boxes of my favourite books, ingeniously selected from the beginnings and ends of editions.

I have finished "Richard Feverel." I kept constantly telling myself that "this novelist is a poet," and when I came to the chapter called "An Enchantress," I felt that

the nineteenth century was ever so far ahead of the Elizabethans. Suddenly I remembered that these were both your ideas. The man affects me terribly. I quite see why, in spite of his being one of our greatest novelists, he is not read. The sense of pain produced by R. F. is intense. My mind ached at passages. I was stifled, and had to stop reading. Even Balzac does not so affect me, for Balzac is more scientific on the one side, and more in his subject on the other. What is terrible about G. M. is, that he feels it as a poet, and stands aside from it as an ironic showman. There is a great want of truth, verisimilitude rather, about some of the characters. I don't realise Sir Austin, or indeed Richard, except as a picture.

Since I last wrote things have not altered much, except that my emotions are less occupied and my imagination more exercised. It is difficult to do anything educationally, or towards living in common here. But I grow and steady and intensify in feeling. The lectures do pretty well, but I have not the art of lecturing; and I do not believe in my own lectures. Yet I keep a fair face and try to be impressive.

[Æt. 45]

To Robert Louis Stevenson

["DR. JEKYLL AND MR. HYDE," WITH A SUGGESTION]

Davos, March 1, 1886.

I doubt whether any one has the right so to scrutinise "the abysmal deeps of personality." You see I have been reading Dr. Jekyll. At least I think he ought to bring more of distinct belief in the resources of human nature, more faith, more sympathy with our frailty, into the matter than you have done. The art is burning and intense. The Peau de Chagrin disappears, and Poe's work is water. Also one discerns at once that this is an allegory of all two-natured souls who yield consciously to evil. Most of us are on the brink of educating a Mr. Hyde at some epoch of our being. But the scientific cast of the allegory will only act as an incentive to moral self-murder with those who perceive the allegory's profundity. Louis,

how had you the "ilia dura, ferro et ære triplici duriora," to write Dr. Jekyll? I know now what was meant when you were called a sprite.

You see I am trembling under the magician's wand of your fancy, and rebelling against it with the scorn of a soul that hates to be contaminated with the mere picture of victorious evil. Our only chance seems to me to be to maintain, against all appearances, that evil can never and in no way be victorious.

I would that you would tell me whether you only used your terrible motif as a good ground-work for a ghastly tale, or whether you meant it to have a moral purpose. But I suppose you won't tell me.

I seem to have lost you so utterly that I can afford to fling truth of the crudest in your face. And yet I love you and think of you daily, and have Dew Smith's portrait of you in front of me.

The suicide end of Dr. Jekyll is too commonplace. Dr. Jekyll ought to have given Mr. Hyde up to justice. This would have vindicated the sense of human dignity which is so horribly outraged in your book.

[Æt. 50]

To Edmund Gosse

[TOBOGGANING]

Davos, February 23rd, 1891.

. . . I have lost my power of living like an invalid. The constant effort of a lifetime to control my health and create the best conditions for repelling disease, has worn my faculties of endurance out. So I do things now which are not prudent. I drove yesterday to a village two hours away from here; attended a peasant theatre, which was tremendous fun; dined with three good companions, Swiss; and drove home at midnight in an open sledge under the most glorious moon and icy wind from the glaciers. This is not a cure for bronchitis. And again, to-day, I started with my girls and our toboggans, and ran a course of four miles, crashing at lightning speed over the snow and ice. We did the journey in about eleven minutes, and I came in breathless, dead-beat, al-

most fainting. Then home in the railway, with open windows and a mad crew of young men and maidens excited by this thrilling exercise. It was solemn and beautiful upon the run. The sun had set, but all the heavens were rosy with its after-glow, and the peaks and snow-fields which surrounded us shone in every tone of crimson and saffron. Then from behind the vast black bulk of a mountain mass, the rising full moon swam rapidly upon our sight, a huge transpicuous dew-pearl of intensest green, bathed in the warm colours of the burning skies. People who summer in the Arctic circle describe these luminous effects. Our rapid motion through the celestial wonders and over the myriad-tinted snow-path, added an intoxicating glory to the vision—until, as we descended from the upper height, the splendours and the path we sped upon were swallowed up in vast chasms of primeval pine-forests, whence we emerged again into the flooding silver of the moon, which at a lower level strove victoriously with the sunset-incandescence we had left behind. But this again was no cure for bronchitis. I have just supped at 11 P. M., and am writing to you with pipe in mouth before I turn into bed.

[Æt. 35]

SIDNEY LANIER

1842–1881

To Gibson Peacock

[SETTLING AT BALTIMORE]

33 Denmead St., Baltimore, Md.,
January 6, 1878.

The painters, the whitewashers, the plumbers, the locksmiths, the carpenters, the gas-fitters, the stove-put-uppers, the carmen, the piano-movers, the carpet-layers,—all these have I seen, bargained with, reproached for bad jobs, and finally paid off: I have also coaxed my landlord into all manner of outlays for damp walls, cold bathrooms, and other like matters: I have furthermore bought at least three hundred and twenty-seven household utensils which suddenly came to be absolutely necessary to our existence: I have moreover hired a colored

gentlewoman who is willing to wear out my carpets, burn out my range, freeze out my water-pipes, and be generally useful: I have also moved my family into our new home, have had a Xmas tree for the youngsters, have looked up a cheap school for Harry and Sidney, have discharged my daily duties as first flute of the Peabody Orchestra, have written a couple of poems and part of an essay on Beethoven and Bismarck, have accomplished at least a hundred thousand miscellaneous necessary nothings,—and have *not*, in consequence of the aforesaid, sent to you and my dear Maria the loving greetings whereof my heart has been full during the whole season. Maria's cards were duly distributed, and we were all touched with her charming little remembrances. With how much pleasure do I look forward to the time when I may kiss her hand in my own house! We are in a state of supreme content with our new home: it really seems to me as incredible that myriads of people have been living in their own homes heretofore as to the young couple with a first baby it seems impossible that a great many other couples have had similar prodigies. It is simply too delightful. Good heavens, how I wish that the whole world had a Home!

I confess I *am* a little nervous about the gas-bills, which must come in, in the course of time; and there are the water-rates, and several sorts of imposts and taxes: but then, the dignity of being liable for such things(!) is a very supporting consideration. No man is a Bohemian who has to pay water-rates and a street-tax. Every day when I sit down in my dining-room—*my* dining-room!—I find the wish growing stronger that each poor soul in Baltimore, whether saint or sinner, could come and dine with me. How I would carve out the merrythoughts for the old hags! How I would stuff the big wall-eyed rascals till their rags ripped again! There was a knight of old times who built the dining-hall of his castle across the highway, so that every wayfarer must perforce pass through: there the traveller, rich or poor, found always a trencher and wherewithal to fill it. Three times a day, in my own chair at my own table, do I envy that knight and wish that I might do as he did.

To Alison Cunningham
[to his nurse]

[1871?]

My dear Cummy,—

I was greatly pleased by your letter in many ways. Of course, I was glad to hear from you; you know, you and I have so many old stories between us, that even if there was nothing else, even if there was not a very sincere respect and affection, we should always be glad to pass a nod. I say "even if there was not." But you know right well there is. Do not suppose that I shall ever forget those long, bitter nights, when I coughed and coughed and was so unhappy, and you were so patient and loving with a poor, sick child. Indeed, Cummy, I wish I might become a man worth talking of, if it were only that you should not have thrown away your pains.

Happily, it is not the result of our acts that makes them brave and noble, but the acts themselves and the unselfish love that moved us to do them. "Inasmuch as you have done it unto one of the least of these." My dear old nurse, and you know there is nothing a man can say nearer his heart except his mother or his wife—my dear old nurse, God will make good to you all the good that you have done, and mercifully forgive you all the evil. And next time when the spring comes round, and everything is beginning once again, if you should happen to think that you might have had a child of your own, and that it was hard you should have spent so many years taking care of some one else's prodigal, just you think this—you have been for a great deal in my life; you have made much that there is in me, just as surely as if you had conceived me; and there are sons who are more ungrateful to their own mothers than I am to you. For I am not ungrateful, my dear Cummy, and it is with a very sincere emotion that I write myself your little boy,

Louis.

[Æt. 22]

To Charles Baxter

[scotch theology]

17 Heriot Row, Edinburgh,
Sunday, February 2, 1873.

My dear Baxter,—

The thunderbolt has fallen with a vengeance now. On Friday night after leaving you, in the course of conversation, my father put me one or two questions as to beliefs, which I candidly answered. I really hate all lying so much now—a new-found honesty that has somehow come out of my late illness—that I could not so much as hesitate at the time; but if I had foreseen the real hell of everything since, I think I should have lied, as I have done so often before. I so far thought of my father, but I had forgotten my mother. And now! they are both ill, both silent, both as down in the mouth as if—I can find no simile. You may fancy how happy it is for me. If it were not too late, I think I could almost find it in my heart to retract, but it is too late; and again, am I to live my whole life as one falsehood? Of course, it is rougher than hell upon my father, but can I help it? They don't see either that my game is not the light-hearted scoffer; that I am not (as they call me) a careless infidel. I believe as much as they do, only generally in the inverse ratio: I am, I think, as honest as they can be in what I hold. I have not come hastily to my views. I reserve (as I told them) many points until I acquire fuller information, and do not think I am thus justly to be called "horrible atheist."

Now what is to take place? What a curse I am to my parents! O Lord, what a pleasant thing it is to have just *damned* the happiness of (probably) the only two people who care a damn about you in the world!

What is my life to be at this rate? What, you rascal? Answer—I have a pistol at your throat. If all that I hold true and most desire to spread is to be such death, and worse than death, in the eyes of my father and mother, what the *devil* am I to do?

Here is a good heavy cross with a vengeance, and all rough with rusty nails that tear your fingers, only it is

not I that have to carry it alone; I hold the light end, but the heavy burden falls on these two.

Don't—I don't know what I was going to say. I am an abject idiot, which, all things considered, is not remarkable.—Ever your affectionate and horrible atheist,

R. L. Stevenson.

[Æt. 24]

To Mrs. Sitwell

[children; early writing; a poet]

Edinburgh, Tuesday [January, 1875].

I got your nice long gossiping letter to-day—I mean by that that there was more news in it than usual—and so, of course, I am pretty jolly. I am in the house, however, with such a beastly cold in the head. Our east winds begin already to be very cold.

O, I have such a longing for children of my own; and yet I do not think I could bear it if I had one. I fancy I must feel more like a woman than like a man about that. I sometimes hate the children I see on the street—you know what I mean by hate—wish they were somewhere else, and not there to mock me; and sometimes, again, I don't know how to go by them for the love of them, especially the very wee ones.

Thursday.—I have been still in the house since I wrote, and I *have* worked. I finished the Italian story; not well, but as well as I can just now; I must go all over it again, some time soon, when I feel in the humour to better and perfect it. And now I have taken up an old story, begun years ago; and I have now rewritten all I had written of it then, and mean to finish it. What I have lost and gained is odd. As far as regards simple writing, of course, I am in another world now; but in some things, though more clumsy, I seem to have been freer and more plucky: this is a lesson I have taken to heart. I have got a jolly new name for my old story. I am going to call it *A Country Dance;* the two heroes keep changing places, you know; and the chapter where the most of this changing goes on is to be called "Up the middle, down the middle." It will be in six or (per-

haps) seven chapters. I have never worked harder in my life than these last four days. If I can only keep it up.

Saturday.—Yesterday, Leslie Stephen, who was down here to lecture, called on me and took me up to see a poor fellow,* a poet who writes for him, and who has been eighteen months in our infirmary, and may be, for all I know, eighteen months more. It was very sad to see him there, in a little room with two beds, and a couple of sick children in the other bed; a girl came in to visit the children, and played dominoes on the counterpane with them; the gas flared and crackled, the fire burned in a dull economical way; Stephen and I sat on a couple of chairs, and the poor fellow sat up in his bed with his hair and beard all tangled, and talked as cheerfully as if he had been in a King's palace, or the great King's palace of the blue air. He has taught himself two languages since he has been lying there. I shall try to be of use to him.

We have had two beautiful spring days, mild as milk, windy withal, and the sun hot. I dreamed last night I was walking by moonlight round the place where the scene of my story is laid; it was all so quiet and sweet, and the blackbirds were singing as if it was day; it made my heart very cool and happy.—Ever yours,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

[Æt. 29]

To W. E. HENLEY

["ACROSS THE PLAINS"]

CROSSING NEBRASKA, [1879].

My dear Henley,—

I am sitting on the top of the cars with a mill party from Missouri going west for his health. Desolate flat prairie upon all hands. Here and there a herd of cattle; a yellow butterfly or two; a patch of wild sunflowers; a wooden house or two; then a wooden church alone in miles of waste; then a wind-mill to pump water. When we stop, which we do often, for emigrants and freight travel together, the kine first, the men after, the whole

* W. E. Henley.

plain is heard singing with cicadæ. This is a pause, as you may see from the writing. What happened to the old pedestrian emigrants, what was the tedium suffered by the Indians and trappers of our youth, the imagination trembles to conceive. This is now Saturday, 23rd, and I have been steadily travelling since I parted from you at St. Pancras. It is a strange vicissitude from the Savile Club to this; I sleep with a man from Pennsylvania who has been in the States Navy, and mess with him and the Missouri bird already alluded to. We have a tin wash-bowl among four. I wear nothing but a shirt and a pair of trousers, and never button my shirt. When I land for a meal, I pass my coat and feel dressed. This life is to last till Friday, Saturday, or Sunday next. It is a strange affair to be an emigrant, as I hope you shall see in a future work. I wonder if this will be legible; my present station on the wagon roof, though airy compared to the cars, is both dirty and insecure. I can see the track straight before and straight behind me to either horizon. Peace of mind I enjoy with extreme serenity; I am doing right; I know no one will think so; and don't care. My body, however, is all to whistles; I don't eat; but, man, I can sleep. The car in front of mine is chock full of Chinese.

Monday.—What it is to be ill in an emigrant train let those declare who know. I slept none till late in the morning, overcome with laudanum, of which I had luckily a little bottle. All to-day I have eaten nothing, and only drunk two cups of tea, for each of which, on the pretext that the one was breakfast, and the other dinner, I was charged fifty cents. Our journey is through ghostly deserts, sage-brush and alkali, and rocks, without form or colour, a sad corner of the world. I confess I am not jolly, but mighty calm, in my distresses. My illness is a subject of great mirth to some of my fellow travellers, and I smile rather sickly at their jests.

We are going along Bitter Creek just now, a place infamous in the history of emigration, a place I shall remember myself among the blackest. I hope I may get this posted at Ogden, Utah.

R. L. S.

[Æt. 29]

To Sidney Colvin

[a day in his life]

608 Bush Street, San Francisco,
[January 10, 1880].

My dear Colvin,—

This is a circular letter to tell my estate fully. You have no right to it, being the worst of correspondents; but I wish to efface the impression of my last, so to you it goes.

Any time between eight and half-past nine in the morning, a slender gentleman in an ulster, with a volume buttoned into the breast of it, may be observed leaving No. 608 Bush and descending Powell with an active step. The gentleman is R. L. S.; the volume relates to Benjamin Franklin, on whom he meditates one of his charming essays. He descends Powell, crosses Market, and descends in Sixth on a branch of the original Pine Street Coffee House, no less; I believe he would be capable of going to the original itself, if he could only find it. In the branch he seats himself at a table covered with waxcloth, and a pampered menial, of High-Dutch extraction and, indeed, as yet only partially extracted, lays before him a cup of coffee, a roll, and a pat of butter, all, to quote the deity, very good. A while ago, and R. L. S. used to find the supply of butter insufficient; but he has now learned the art to exactitude, and butter and roll expire at the same moment. For this refection he pays ten cents, or fivepence sterling (£0. 0s. 5d.).

Half an hour later, the inhabitants of Bush Street observe the same slender gentleman armed, like George Washington, with his little hatchet, splitting kindling, and breaking coal for his fire. He does this quasi-publicly upon the window-sill; but this is not to be attributed to any love of notoriety, though he is indeed vain of his prowess with the hatchet (which he persists in calling an axe), and daily surprised at the perpetuation of his fingers. The reason is this: that the sill is a strong, supporting beam, and that blows of the same emphasis in other parts of his room might knock the entire shanty

into hell. Thenceforth, for from three to four hours, he is engaged darkly with an inkbottle. Yet he is not blacking his boots, for the only pair that he possesses are innocent of lustre and wear the natural hue of the material turned up with caked and venerable slush. The youngest child of his landlady remarks several times a day, as this strange occupant enters or quits the house, "Dere's de author." Can it be that this bright-haired innocent has found the true clue to the mystery? The being in question is, at least, poor enough to belong to that honourable craft.

His next appearance is at the restaurant of one Donadieu, in Bush Street, between Dupont and Kearney, where a copious meal, half a bottle of wine, coffee and brandy may be procured for the sum of four bits, *alias* fifty cents, £0. 2s. 2d. sterling. The wine is put down in a whole bottleful, and it is strange and painful to observe the greed with which the gentleman in question seeks to secure the last drop of his allotted half, and the scrupulousness with which he seeks to avoid taking the first drop of the other. This is partly explained by the fact that if he were to go over the mark—bang would go a tenpence. He is again armed with a book, but his best friends will learn with pain that he seems at this hour to have deserted the more serious studies of the morning. When last observed, he was studying with apparent zest the exploits of one Rocambole by the late Vicomte Ponson du Terrail. This work, originally of prodigious dimensions, he had cut into liths or thicknesses, apparently for convenience of carriage.

Then the being walks, where is not certain. But by about half-past four a light beams from the windows of 608 Bush, and he may be observed sometimes engaged in correspondence, sometimes once again plunged in the mysterious rites of the forenoon. About six he returns to the Branch Original, where he once more imbrues himself to the worth of fivepence in coffee and roll. The evening is devoted to writing and reading, and by eleven or half-past darkness closes over this weird and truculent existence.

As for coin, you see I don't spend much, only you and Henley both seem to think my work rather bosh nowa-

days, and I do want to make as much as I was making, that is £200; if I can do that, I can swim: last year, with my ill-health I touched only £109, that would not do, I could not fight it through on that; but on £200, as I say, I am good for the world, and can even in this quiet way save a little, and that I must do. The worst is my health; it is suspected I had an ague chill yesterday; I shall know by to-morrow, and you know if I am to be laid down with ague the game is pretty well lost. But I don't know; I managed to write a good deal down in Monterey, when I was pretty sickly most of the time, and, by God, I'll try, ague and all. I have to ask you frankly, when you write, to give me any good news you can, and chat a little, but *just in the meantime,* give me no bad. If I could get "Thoreau," *Emigrant,* and *Vendetta* all finished and out of my hand, I should feel like a man who had made half a year's income in a half year; but until the last two are *finished,* you see, they don't fairly count.

I am afraid I bore you sadly with this perpetual talk about my affairs; I will try and stow it; but you see, it touches me nearly. I'm the miser in earnest now: last night, when I felt so ill, the supposed ague chill, it seemed strange not to be able to afford a drink. I would have walked half a mile, tired as I felt, for a brandy and soda.—Ever yours,

R. L. S.

[Æt. 29]

To Edmund Gosse

[A "FRIENDLY GAME" WITH DEATH]

San Francisco, Cal.,
April 16 [1880].

My dear Gosse,—

You have not answered my last; and I know you will repent when you hear how near I have been to another world. For about six weeks I have been in utter doubt; it was a toss-up for life or death all that time; but I won the toss, sir, and Hades went off once more discomfited. This is not the first time, nor will it be the last, that I have a friendly game with that gentleman.

I know he will end by cleaning me out; but the rogue is insidious, and the habit of that sort of gambling seems to be a part of my nature; it was, I suspect, too much indulged in youth; break your children of this tendency, my dear Gosse, from the first. It is, when once formed, a habit more fatal than opium—I speak, as St. Paul says, like a fool. I have been very very sick; on the verge of a galloping consumption, cold sweats, prostrating attacks of cough, sinking fits in which I lost the power of speech, fever, and all the ugliest circumstances of the disease; and I have cause to bless God, my wife that is to be, and one Dr. Bamford (a name the Muse repels), that I have come out of all this, and got my feet once more upon a little hilltop, with a fair prospect of life and some new desire of living. Yet I did not wish to die, neither; only I felt unable to go on farther with that rough horseplay of human life: a man must be pretty well to take the business in good part. Yet I felt all the time that I had done nothing to entitle me to an honourable discharge; that I had taken up many obligations and begun many friendships which I had no right to put away from me; and that for me to die was to play the cur and slinking sybarite, and desert the colours on the eve of the decisive fight. Of course I have done no work for I do not know how long; and here you can triumph. I have been reduced to writing verses for amusement. A fact. The whirligig of time brings in its revenges, after all. But I'll have them buried with me, I think, for I have not the heart to burn them while I live. Do write. I shall go to the mountains as soon as the weather clears; on the way thither, I marry myself; then I set up my family altar among the pinewoods, 3000 feet, sir, from the disputatious sea.—I am, dear Weg, most truly yours,

R. L. S.

[Æt. 30]

To W. E. Henley

["treasure island"]

Braemar, August, 1881.

My dear Henley,—

Of course I am a rogue. Why, Lord, it's known, man; but you should remember I have had a horrid cold. Now I'm better, I think; and see here—nobody, not you, nor Lang, nor the devil, will hurry me with our crawlers.* They are coming. Four of them are as good as done, and the rest will come when ripe; but I am now on another lay for the moment, purely owing to Lloyd, this one; but I believe there's more coin in it than in any amount of crawlers: now, see here, "The Sea-Cook, or Treasure Island: A Story for Boys."

If this don't fetch the kids, why, they have gone rotten since my day. Will you be surprised to learn that it is about Buccaneers, that it begins in the *Admiral Benbow* public-house on Devon coast, that it's all about a map, and a treasure, and a mutiny, and a derelict ship, and a current, and a fine old Squire Trelawney (the real Tre, purged of literature and sin, to suit the infant mind), and a doctor, and another doctor, and a sea-cook with one leg, and a sea-song with the chorus "Yo-ho-ho and a bottle of rum" (at the third Ho you heave at the capstan bars), which is a real buccaneer's song, only known to the crew of the late Captain Flint (died of rum at Key West, much regretted, friends will please accept this intimation); and lastly, would you be surprised to hear, in this connection, the name of *Routledge?* That's the kind of man I am, blast your eyes. Two chapters are written, and have been tried on Lloyd with great success; the trouble is to work it off without oaths. Buccaneers without oaths—bricks without straw. But youth and the fond parent have to be consulted.

And now look here—this is next day—and three chapters are written and read. (Chapter I. The Old Seadog at the *Admiral Benbow.* Chapter II. Black Dog appears and disappears. Chapter III. The Black Spot.) All now

* Tales of horror.

heard by Lloyd, F., and my father and mother, with high approval. It's quite silly and horrid fun, and what I want is the *best* book about the Buccaneers that can be had—the latter B's above all, Blackbeard and sich, and get Nutt or Bain to send it skimming by the fastest post. And now I know you'll write to me, for "The Sea-Cook's" sake.

Your "Admiral Guinea" is curiously near my line, but of course I'm fooling; and your admiral sounds like a shublime gent. Stick to him like wax—he'll do. My Trelawney is, as I indicate, several thousand sea-miles off the lie of the original or your Admiral Guinea; and besides, I have no more about him yet but one mention of his name, and I think it likely he may turn yet farther from the model in the course of handling. A chapter a day I mean to do; they are short; and perhaps in a month "The Sea-Cook" may to Routledge go, yo-ho-ho and a bottle of rum! My Trelawney has a strong dash of Landor, as I see him from here. No women in the story, Lloyd's orders; and who so blithe to obey? It's awful fun, boys' stories; you just indulge the pleasure of your heart, that's all; no trouble, no strain. The only stiff thing is to get it ended—that I don't see, but I look to a volcano. O sweet, O generous, O human toils! You would like my blind beggar in Chapter III., I believe; no writing, just drive along as the words come and the pen will scratch!

R. L. S.,
Author of *Boys' Stories.*

[Æt. 32]

To R. A. M. Stevenson

["there is but one art—to omit"]

La Solitude, Hyères-les-Palmiers,
[October, 1883].

My dear Bob,—

Yes, I got both your letters at Lyons, but have been since then decading in several steps. Toothache; fever; Ferrier's death; lung. Now it is decided I am to leave to-morrow, penniless, for Nice to see Dr. Williams.

I was much struck by your last. I have written a breathless note on Realism for Henley; a fifth part of the

subject hurriedly touched, which will show you how my thoughts are driving. You are now at last beginning to think upon the problems of executive, plastic art, for you are now for the first time attacking them. Hitherto you have spoken and thought of two things—technique and the *ars artium*, or common background of all arts. Studio work is the real touch. That is the genial error of the present French teaching. Realism I regard as a mere question of method. The "brown foreground," "old mastery," and the like, ranking with villanelles, as technical sports and pastimes. Real art, whether ideal or realistic, addresses precisely the same feeling, and seeks the same qualities—significance or charm. And the same —very same—inspiration is only methodically differentiated according as the artist is an arrant realist or an arrant idealist. Each, by his own method, seeks to save and perpetuate the same significance or charm; the one by suppressing, the other by forcing, detail. All other idealism is the brown foreground over again, and hence only art in the sense of a game, like cup and ball. All other realism is not art at all—but not at all. It is, then, an insincere and showy handicraft.

Were you to re-read some Balzac, as I have been doing, it would greatly help to clear your eyes. He was a man who never found his method. An inarticulate Shakespeare, smothered under forcible-feeble detail. It is astounding to the riper mind how bad he is, how feeble, how untrue, how tedious; and, of course, when he surrendered to his temperament, how good and powerful. And yet never plain nor clear. He could not consent to be dull, and thus became so. He would leave nothing undeveloped, and thus drowned out of sight of land amid the multitude of crying and incongruous details. There is but one art—to omit! O if I knew how to omit, I would ask no other knowledge. A man who knew how to omit would make an *Iliad* of a daily paper.

Your definition of seeing is quite right. It is the first part of omission to be partly blind. Artistic sight is judicious blindness. Sam Bough must have been a jolly blind old boy. He would turn a corner, look for one-half or quarter minute, and then say, "This'll do, lad." Down he sat, there and then, with whole artistic plan, scheme

of colour, and the like, and began by laying a foundation of powerful and seemingly incongruous colour on the block. He saw, not the scene, but the water-colour sketch. Every artist by sixty should so behold nature. Where does he learn that? In the studio, I swear. He goes to nature for facts, relations, values—material; as a man, before writing a historical novel, reads up memoirs. But it is not by reading memoirs that he has learned the selective criterion. He has learned that in the practice of his art; and he will never learn it well, but when disengaged from the ardent struggle of immediate representations, of realistic and *ex facto* art. He learns it in the crystallisation of day-dreams; in changing, not in copying, fact; in the pursuit of the ideal, not in the study of nature. These temples of art are, as you say, inaccessible to the realistic climber. It is not by looking at the sea that you get

"The multitudinous seas incarnadine,"

nor by looking at Mont Blanc that you find

"And visited all night by troops of stars."

A kind of ardour of the blood is the mother of all this; and according as this ardour is swayed by knowledge and seconded by craft, the art expression flows clear, and significance and charm, like a moon rising, are born above the barren juggle of mere symbols.

The painter must study more from nature than the man of words. But why? Because literature deals with men's business and passions which, in the game of life, we are irresistibly obliged to study; but painting with relations of light, and colour, and significances, and form, which, from the immemorial habit of the race, we pass over with an unregardful eye. Hence this crouching upon camp-stools, and these crusts. But neither one nor other is a part of art, only preliminary studies.

I want you to help me to get people to understand that realism is a method, and only methodic in its consequences; when the realist is an artist, that is, and supposing the idealist with whom you compare him to be

anything but a *farceur* and a *dilettante*. The two schools of working do, and should, lead to the choice of different subjects. But that is a consequence, not a cause. See my chaotic note, which will appear, I fancy, in November in Henley's sheet.

Poor Ferrier, it bust me horrid. He was, after you, the oldest of my friends.

I am now very tired, and will go to bed having prelected freely. Fanny will finish.

R. L. S.

[Æt. 34]

To William Archer

[in remonstrance]

Skerryvore, Bournemouth, October 28, 1885.

Dear Mr. Archer,—

I have read your paper with my customary admiration; it is very witty, very adroit; it contains a great deal that is excellently true (particularly the parts about my stories and the description of me as an artist in life); but you will not be surprised if I do not think it altogether just. It seems to me, in particular, that you have wilfully read all my works in terms of my earliest; my aim, even in style, has quite changed in the last six or seven years; and this I should have thought you would have noticed. Again, your first remark upon the affectation of the italic names; a practice only followed in my two affected little books of travel, where a typographical *minauderie* of the sort appeared to me in character; and what you say of it, then, is quite just. But why should you forget yourself and use these same italics as an index to my theology some pages further on? This is lightness of touch indeed; may I say, it is almost sharpness of practice?

Excuse these remarks. I have been on the whole much interested, and sometimes amused. Are you aware that the praiser of this "brave gymnasium" has not seen a canoe nor taken a long walk since '79? that he is rarely out of the house nowadays, and carries his arm in a sling? Can you imagine that he is a backslidden communist, and is sure he will go to hell (if there be such an excellent institution) for the luxury in which he lives?

And can you believe that, though it is gaily expressed, the thought is hag and skeleton in every moment of vacuity or depression? Can you conceive how profoundly I am irritated by the opposite affectation to my own, when I see strong men and rich men bleating about their sorrows and the burthen of life, in a world full of "cancerous paupers," and poor sick children, and the fatally bereaved, ay, and down even to such happy creatures as myself, who has yet been obliged to strip himself, one after another, of all the pleasures that he had chosen except smoking (and the days of that I know in my heart ought to be over), I forgot eating, which I still enjoy, and who sees the circle of impotence closing very slowly but quite steadily around him? In my view, one dank, dispirited word is harmful, a crime of *lèse-humanité,* a piece of acquired evil; every gay, every bright word or picture, like every pleasant air of music, is a piece of pleasure set afloat; the reader catches it, and, if he be healthy, goes on his way rejoicing; and it is the business of art so to send him, as often as possible.

For what you say, so kindly, so prettily, so precisely, of my style, I must in particular thank you; though even here, I am vexed you should not have remarked on my attempted change of manner: seemingly this attempt is still quite unsuccessful! Well, we shall fight it out on this line if it takes all summer.

And now for my last word: Mrs. Stevenson is very anxious that you should see me, and that she should see you, in the flesh. If you at all share in these views, I am a fixture. Write or telegraph (giving us time, however, to telegraph in reply, lest the day be impossible), and come down here to a bed and a dinner. What do you say, my dear critic? I shall be truly pleased to see you; and to explain at greater length what I mean by saying narrative was the most characteristic mood of literature, on which point I have great hopes I shall persuade you.—Yours truly,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

[Æt. 34]

To William Archer

["A terrible, but a very joyous and noble universe"]

Skerryvore, Bournemouth, November 1, 1885.

Dear Mr. Archer,—

You will see that I had already had a sight of your article and what were my thoughts.

One thing in your letter puzzles me. Are you, too, not in the witness-box? And if you are, why take a wilfully false hypothesis? If you knew I was a chronic invalid, why say that my philosophy was unsuitable to such a case? My call for facts is not so general as yours, but an essential fact should not be put the other way about.

The fact is, consciously or not, you doubt my honesty; you think I am making faces, and at heart disbelieve my utterances. And this I am disposed to think must spring from your not having had enough of pain, sorrow, and trouble in your existence. It is easy to have too much; easy also or possible to have too little; enough is required that a man may appreciate what elements of consolation and joy there are in everything but absolutely overpowering physical pain or disgrace, and how in almost all circumstances the human soul can play a fair part. You fear life, I fancy, on the principle of the hand of little employment. But perhaps my hypothesis is as unlike the truth as the one you chose. Well, if it be so, if you have had trials, sickness, the approach of death, the alienation of friends, poverty at the heels, and have not felt your soul turn round upon these things and spurn them under —you must be very differently made from me, and I earnestly believe from the majority of men. But at least you are in the right to wonder and complain.

To "say all"? Stay here. All at once? That would require a word from the pen of Gargantua. We say each particular thing as it comes up, and "with that sort of emphasis that for the time there seems to be no other." Words will not otherwise serve us; no, nor even Shakespeare, who could not have put *As You Like It* and *Timon* into one without ruinous loss both of emphasis and substance. Is it quite fair then to keep your face so steadily

on my most light-hearted works, and then say I recognise no evil? Yet in the paper on Burns, for instance, I show myself alive to some sorts of evil. But then, perhaps, they are not your sorts.

And again: to "say all?" All: yes. Everything: no. The task were endless, the effect *nil*. But my all, in such a vast field as this of life, is what interests me, what stands out, what takes on itself a presence for my imagination or makes a figure in that little tricky abbreviation which is the best that my reason can conceive. That I must treat, or I shall be fooling with my readers. That, and not the all of some one else.

And here we come to the division: not only do I believe that literature should give joy, but I see a universe, I suppose, eternally different from yours; a solemn, a terrible, but a very joyous and noble universe, where suffering is not at least wantonly inflicted, though it falls with dispassionate partiality, but where it may be and generally is nobly borne; where, above all (this I believe; probably you don't: I think he may, with cancer), *any brave man may make* out a life which shall be happy for himself, and, by so being, beneficent to those about him. And if he fails, why should I hear him weeping? I mean if I fail, why should I weep? Why should *you* hear *me?* Then to me morals, the conscience, the affections, and the passions are, I will own frankly and sweepingly, so infinitely more important than the other parts of life, that I conceive men rather triflers who become immersed in the latter; and I will always think the man who keeps his lip stiff, and makes "a happy fireside clime," and carries a pleasant face about to friends and neighbors, infinitely greater (in the abstract) than an atrabilious Shakespeare or a backbiting Kant or Darwin. No offence to any of these gentlemen, two of whom probably (one for certain) came up to my standard.

And now enough said; it were hard if a poor man could not criticise another without having so much ink shed against him. But I shall still regret you should have written on an hypothesis you knew to be untenable, and that you should thus have made your paper, for those who do not know me, essentially unfair. The rich, fox-

hunting squire speaks with one voice; the sick man of letters with another.—Yours very truly,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON
(Prometheus-Heine in minimis).

P.S.—Here I go again. To me, the medicine bottles on my chimney and the blood on my handkerchief are accidents; they do not colour my view of life, as you would know, I think, if you had experience of sickness; they do not exist in my prospect; I would as soon drag them under the eyes of my readers as I would mention a pimple I might chance to have (saving your presence) on my posteriors. What does it prove? what does it change? it has not hurt, it has not changed me in any essential part; and I should think myself a trifler and in bad taste if I introduced the world to these unimportant privacies.

But, again, there is this mountain-range between us—*that you do not believe me.* It is not flattering, but the fault is probably in my literary art.

[Æt. 36]

To HENRY JAMES
[LIFE AT SARANAC]

SARANAC LAKE, 1887.
I know not the day; but the month it is the drear October by the ghoul-haunted woodland of Weir.

My dear Henry James,—

This is to say, *First,* the voyage was a huge success. We all enjoyed it (bar my wife) to the ground: sixteen days at sea with a cargo of hay, matches, stallions, and monkeys, and in a ship with no style on, and plenty of sailors to talk to, and the endless pleasures of the sea—the romance of it, the sport of the scratch dinner and the smashing crockery, the pleasure—an endless pleasure—of balancing to the swell: well, it's over.

Second, I had a fine time, rather a troubled one, at Newport and New York; saw much of and liked hugely

the Fairchilds, St. Gaudens the sculptor, Gilder of the *Century*—just saw the dear Alexander—saw a lot of my old and admirable friend Will Low, whom I wish you knew and appreciated—was medallioned by St. Gaudens, and at last escaped to

Third, Saranac Lake, where we now are, and which I believe we mean to like and pass the winter at. Our house—emphatically "Baker's"—is on a hill, and has a sight of a stream turning a corner in the valley—bless the face of running water!—and sees some hills too, and the paganly prosaic roofs of Saranac itself; the Lake it does not see, nor do I regret that; I like water (fresh water I mean) either running swiftly among stones, or else largely qualified with whisky. As I write, the sun (which has been long a stranger) shines in at my shoulder; from the next room, the bell of Lloyd's typewriter makes an agreeable music as it patters off (at a rate which astonishes this experienced novelist) the early chapters of a humorous romance; from still further off—the walls of Baker's are neither ancient nor massive—rumours of Valentine about the kitchen stove come to my ears; of my mother and Fanny I hear nothing, for the excellent reason that they have gone sparking off, one to Niagara, one to Indianapolis. People complain that I never give news in my letters. I have wiped out that reproach.

But now, *Fourth,* I have seen the article; and it may be from natural partiality, I think it the best you have written. O—I remember the Gautier, which was an excellent performance; and the Balzac, which was good; and the Daudet, over which I licked my chops; but the R. L. S. is better yet. It is so humorous, and it hits my little frailties with so neat (and so friendly) a touch; and Alan is the occasion for so much happy talk, and the quarrel is so generously praised. I read it twice, though it was only some hours in my possession; and Low, who got it for me from the *Century,* sat up to finish it ere he returned it; and, sir, we were all delighted. Here is the paper out, nor will anything, not even friendship, not even gratitude for the article, induce me to begin a second sheet; so here with the kindest remembrances and the warmest good wishes, I remain, yours affectionately,

R. L. S.

[Æt. 37]

To William Archer

["cutting the flesh off" stories]

[Saranac Lake, February, 1888.]

My dear Archer,—

Pretty sick in bed; but necessary to protest and continue your education.

Why was Jenkin an amateur in my eyes? You think because not amusing (I think he often was amusing). The reason is this: I never, or almost never, saw two pages of his work that I could not have put in one without the smallest loss of material. That is the only test I know of writing. If there is anywhere a thing said in two sentences that could have been as clearly and as engagingly and as forcibly said in one, then it's amateur work. Then you will bring me up with old Dumas. Nay, the object of a story is to be long, to fill up hours; the story-teller's art of writing is to water out by continual invention, historical and technical, and yet not seem to water; seem on the other hand to practise that same wit of conspicuous and declaratory condensation which is the proper art of writing. That is one thing in which my stories fail: I am always cutting the flesh off their bones.

I would rise from the dead to preach!

Hope all well. I think my wife better, but she's not allowed to write; and this (only wrung from me by desire to Boss and Parsonise and Dominate, strong in sickness) is my first letter for days, and will likely be my last for many more. Not blame my wife for her silence: doctor's orders. All much interested by your last, and fragment from brother, and anecdotes of Tomarcher.—The sick but still Moral

R. L. S.

Tell Shaw to hurry up: I want another.

[Æt. 38]

To Thomas Archer

[to a boy]

Tautira, Island of Tahiti [November, 1888].

Dear Tomarcher,—

This is a pretty state of things! seven o'clock and no word of breakfast! And I was awake a good deal last night, for it was full moon, and they had made a great fire of cocoanut husks down by the sea, and as we have no blinds or shutters, this kept my room very bright. And then the rats had a wedding or a school-feast under my bed. And then I woke early, and I have nothing to read except Virgil's *Æneid,* which is not good fun on an empty stomach, and a Latin dictionary, which is good for naught, and by some humorous accident, your dear papa's article on Skerryvore. And I read the whole of that, and very impudent it is, but you must not tell your dear papa I said so, or it might come to a battle in which you might lose either a dear papa or a valued correspondent, or both, which would be prodigal. And still no breakfast; so I said "Let's write to Tomarcher."

This is a much better place for children than any I have hitherto seen in these seas. The girls (and sometimes the boys) play a very elaborate kind of hopscotch. The boys play horses exactly as we do in Europe; and have very good fun on stilts trying to knock each other down, in which they do not often succeed. The children of all ages go to church and are allowed to do what they please, running about the aisles, rolling balls, stealing mamma's bonnet and publicly sitting on it, and at last going to sleep in the middle of the floor. I forgot to say that the whips to play horses, and the balls to roll about the church—at least I never saw them used elsewhere—grow ready-made on trees; which is rough on toy-shops. The whips are so good that I wanted to play horses myself; but no such luck! my hair is grey, and I am a great, big, ugly man. The balls are rather hard, but very light and quite round. When you grow up and become offensively rich, you can charter a ship in the port of London, and have it come back to you entirely loaded with these balls; when you could satisfy your mind as to their

character, and give them away when done with to your uncles and aunts. But what I really wanted to tell you was this: besides the tree-top toys (Hush-a-by, toy-shop, on the tree-top!), I have seen some real *made* toys, the first hitherto observed in the South Seas.

This was how. You are to imagine a four-wheeled gig; one horse; in the front seat two Tahiti natives, in their Sunday clothes, blue coat, white shirt, kilt (a little longer than the Scotch) of a blue stuff with big white or yellow flowers, legs and feet bare; in the back seat me and my wife, who is a friend of yours; under our feet, plenty of lunch and things: among us a great deal of fun in broken Tahitian, one of the natives, the sub-chief of the village, being a great ally of mine. Indeed we have exchanged names; so that he is now called Rui, the nearest they can come to Louis, for they have no *l* and no *s* in their language. Rui is six feet three in his stockings, and a magnificent man. We all have straw hats, for the sun is strong. We drive between the sea, which makes a great noise, and the mountains; the road is cut through a forest mostly of fruit trees, the very creepers, which take the place of our ivy, heavy with a great and delicious fruit, bigger than your head and far nicer, called Barbedine. Presently we came to a house in a pretty garden, quite by itself, very nicely kept, the doors and windows open, no one about, and no noise but that of the sea. It looked like a house in a fairy tale, and just beyond we must ford a river, and there we saw the inhabitants. Just in the mouth of the river, where it met the sea waves, they were ducking and bathing and screaming together like a covey of birds: seven or eight little naked brown boys and girls as happy as the day was long; and on the banks of the stream beside them, real toys—toy ships, full rigged, and with their sails set, though they were lying in the dust on their beam ends. And then I knew for sure they were all children in a fairy story, living alone together in that lonely house with the only toys in all the island; and that I had myself driven, in my four-wheeled gig, into a corner of the fairy story, and the question was, should I get out again? But it was all right; I guess only one of the wheels of the gig had got into the fairy story; and the next jolt the whole thing vanished, and we drove on in

our seaside forest as before, and I have the honour to be Tomarcher's valued correspondent, TERIITERA, which he was previously known as

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

[Æt. 38]

TO SIDNEY COLVIN

[VISIT TO MOLOKAI; FATHER DAMIEN]

[HONOLULU, May or June, 1889].

My dear Colvin,—

I am just home after twelve days' journey to Molokai, seven of them at the leper settlement, where I can only say that the sight of so much courage, cheerfulness, and devotion strung me too high to mind the infinite pity and horror of the sights. I used to ride over from Kalawao to Kalaupapa (about three miles across the promontory, the cliff-wall, ivied with forest and yet inaccessible from steepness, on my left), go to the sister's home, which is a miracle of neatness, play a game of croquet with seven leper girls (90° in the shade), get a little old-maid meal served me by the sisters, and ride home again, tired enough, but not too tired. The girls have all dolls, and love dressing them. You who know so many ladies delicately clad, and they who know so many dressmakers, please make it known it would be an acceptable gift to send scraps for doll dressmaking to the Reverend Sister Maryanne, Bishop Home, Kalaupapa Molokai, Hawaiian Islands.

I have seen sights that cannot be told, and heard stories that cannot be repeated: yet I never admired my poor race so much, nor (strange as it may seem) loved life more than in the settlement. A horror of moral beauty broods over the place: that's like bad Victor Hugo, but it is the only way I can express the sense that lived with me all these days. And this even though it was in great part Catholic, and my sympathies flew never with so much difficulty as towards Catholic virtues. The pass-book kept with heaven stirs me to anger and laughter. One of the sisters calls the place "the ticket office to heaven." Well, what is the odds? They do their darg, and do it with

kindness and efficiency incredible; and we must take folk's virtues as we find them, and love the better part. Of old Damien, whose weaknesses and worse perhaps I heard fully, I think only the more. It was a European peasant: dirty, bigotted, untruthful, unwise, tricky, but superb with generosity, residual candour and fundamental good-humour: convince him he had done wrong (it might take hours of insult) and he would undo what he had done and like his corrector better. A man, with all the grime and paltriness of mankind, but a saint and hero all the more for that. The place as regards scenery is grand, gloomy, and bleak. Mighty mountain walls descending sheer along the whole face of the island into a sea unusually deep; the front of the mountain ivied and furred with clinging forest, one viridescent cliff: about half-way from east to west, the low, bare, stony promontory edged in between the cliff and the ocean; the two little towns (Kalawao and Kalaupapa) seated on either side of it, as bare almost as bathing machines upon a beach; and the population—gorgons and chimæras dire. All this tear of the nerves I bore admirably; and the day after I got away, rode twenty miles along the opposite coast and up into the mountains: they call it twenty, I am doubtful of the figures: I should guess it nearer twelve; but let me take credit for what residents allege; and I was riding again the day after, so I need say no more about health. Honolulu does not agree with me at all: I am always out of sorts there, with slight headache, blood to the head, etc. I had a good deal of work to do and did it with miserable difficulty; and yet all the time I have been gaining strength, as you see, which is highly encouraging. By the time I am done with this cruise I shall have the material for a very singular book of travels: names of strange stories and characters, cannibals, pirates, ancient legends, old Polynesian poetry,—never was so generous a farrago. I am going down now to get the story of a shipwrecked family, who were fifteen months on an island with a murderer: there is a specimen. The Pacific is a strange place; the nineteenth century only exists there in spots: all around, it is a no man's land of the ages, a stir-about of epochs and races, barbarisms and civilisations, virtues and crimes.

It is good of you to let me stay longer, but if I had known how ill you were, I should be now on my way home. I had chartered my schooner and made all arrangements before (at last) we got definite news. I feel highly guilty; I should be back to insult and worry you a little. Our address till further notice is to be c/o R. Towns and Co., Sydney. That is final: I only got the arrangement made yesterday; but you may now publish it abroad.—Yours ever,

R. L. S.

[Æt. 40]

To Henry James

[KIPLING'S "DEBAUCH OF PRODUCTION"]

Vailima, Apia, Samoa,
December 29th, 1890.

My dear Henry James,—

. . . Kipling is by far the most promising young man who has appeared since—ahem—I appeared. He amazes me by his precocity and various endowment. But he alarms me by his copiousness and haste. He should shield his fire with both hands "and draw up all his strength and sweetness in one ball!" ("Draw all his strength and all His sweetness up into one ball?" I cannot remember Marvell's words.) So the critics have been saying to me; but I was never capable of—and surely never guilty of—such a debauch of production. At this rate his works will soon fill the habitable globe; and surely he was armed for better conflicts than these succinct sketches and flying leaves of verse? I look on, I admire, I rejoice for myself; but in a kind of ambition we all have for our tongue and literature I am wounded. If I had this man's fertility and courage, it seems to me I could heave a pyramid.

[Æt. 40]

To Mr. Ide

[TRANSFERRING A BIRTHDAY]

[Vailima, June 19, 1891.]

Dear Mr. Ide,

Herewith please find the DOCUMENT, which I trust will prove sufficient in law. It seems to me very attractive in its eclecticism; Scots, English, and Roman law phrases are all indifferently introduced, and a quotation from the works of Haynes Bailey can hardly fail to attract the indulgence of the Bench.—Yours very truly,

Robert Louis Stevenson.

I, Robert Louis Stevenson, Advocate of the Scots Bar, author of *The Master of Ballantrae* and *Moral Emblems,* stuck civil engineer, sole owner and patentee of the Palace and Plantation known as Vailima in the island of Upolu, Samoa, a British subject, being in sound mind, and pretty well, I thank you, in body:

In consideration that Miss Annie H. Ide, daughter of H. C. Ide, in the town of St. Johnsbury, in the county of Caledonia, in the state of Vermont, United States of America, was born, out of all reason, upon Christmas Day, and is therefore out of all justice denied the consolation and profit of a proper birthday;

And considering that I, the said Robert Louis Stevenson, have attained an age when O, we never mention it, and that I have now no further use for a birthday of any description;

And in consideration that I have met H. C. Ide, the father of the said Annie H. Ide, and found him about as white a land commissioner as I require:

Have transferred, and *do hereby transfer,* to the said Annie H. Ide, *all and whole* my rights and privileges in the thirteenth day of November, formerly my birthday, now, hereby, and henceforth, the birthday of the said Annie H. Ide, to have, hold, exercise, and enjoy the same in the customary manner, by the sporting of fine raiment, eating of rich meats, and receipt of gifts, compliments, and copies of verse, according to the manner of our ancestors;

And I direct the said Annie H. Ide to add to the said name of Annie H. Ide the name Louisa—at least in private; and I charge her to use my said birthday with moderation and humanity, *et tamquam bona filia familia,* the said birthday not being so young as it once was, and having carried me in a very satisfactory manner since I can remember;

And in case the said Annie H. Ide shall neglect or contravene either of the above conditions, I hereby revoke the donation and transfer my rights in the said birthday to the President of the United States of America for the time being:

In witness whereof I have hereto set my hand and seal this nineteenth day of June in the year of grace eighteen hundred and ninety-one.

SEAL

Robert Louis Stevenson.

Witness, Lloyd Osbourne,
Witness, Harold Watts.

[Æt. 41]

To Miss Annie H. Ide
[his "name-daughter"]

Vailima, Samoa [November, 1891].

My dear Louisa,—

Your picture of the church, the photograph of yourself and your sister, and your very witty and pleasing letter, came all in a bundle, and made me feel I had my money's worth for that birthday. I am now, I must be, one of your nearest relatives; exactly what we are to each other, I do not know, I doubt if the case has ever happened before—your papa ought to know, and I don't believe he does; but I think I ought to call you in the meanwhile, and until we get the advice of counsel learned in the law, my name-daughter. Well, I was extremely pleased to see by the church that my name-daughter could

draw; by the letter, that she was no fool; and by the photograph, that she was a pretty girl, which hurts nothing. See how virtues are rewarded! My first idea of adopting you was entirely charitable; and here I find that I am quite proud of it, and of you, and that I chose just the kind of name-daughter I wanted. For I can draw too, or rather I mean to say I could before I forgot how; and I am very far from being a fool myself, however much I may look it; and I am as beautiful as the day, or at least I once hoped that perhaps I might be going to be. And so I might. So that you see we are well met, and peers on these important points. I am very glad also that you are older than your sister. So should I have been, if I had had one. So that the number of points and virtues which you have inherited from your name-father is already quite surprising.

I wish you would tell your father—not that I like to encourage my rival—that we have had a wonderful time here of late, and that they are having a cold day on Mulinuu, and the consuls are writing reports, and I am writing to the *Times*, and if we don't get rid of our friends this time I shall begin to despair of everything but my name-daughter.

You are quite wrong as to the effect of the birthday on your age. From the moment the deed was registered (as it was in the public press with every solemnity), the 13th of November became your own *and only* birthday, and you ceased to have been born on Christmas Day. Ask your father: I am sure he will tell you this is sound law. You are thus become a month and twelve days younger than you were, but will go on growing older for the future in the regular and human manner from one 13th November to the next. The effect on me is more doubtful; I may, as you suggest, live for ever; I might, on the other hand, come to pieces like the one-horse shay at a moment's notice: doubtless the step was risky, but I do not the least regret that which enables me to sign myself your revered and delighted name-father,

Robert Louis Stevenson.

[Æt. 42]

To James Payn

["continual spasms of cannon"; piquet]

Vailima, Upolu, Samoa [August, 1893].

My dear James Payn,—

I hear from Lang that you are unwell, and it reminds me of two circumstances: First, that it is a very long time since you had the exquisite pleasure of hearing from me; and second, that I have been very often unwell myself, and sometimes had to thank you for a grateful anodyne.

They are not good, the circumstances, to write an anodyne letter. The hills and my house at less than (boom) a minute's interval quake with thunder; and though I cannot hear that part of it, shells are falling thick into the fort of Lotoanuu (boom). It is my friend of the Curaçoa, the Adler, and the Bussard bombarding (after all these-boom-months) the rebels of Atua. (Boom-boom.) It is most distracting in itself; and the thought of the poor devils in their fort (boom) with their bits of rifles far from pleasant. (Boom-boom.) You can see how quick it goes, and I'll say no more about Mr. Bow-wow, only you must understand the perpetual accompaniment of this discomfortable sound, and make allowances for the value of my copy. It is odd, though, I can well remember when the Franco-Prussian war began, and I was in Eilean Earraid, far enough from the sound of the loudest cannonade, I could *hear* the shots fired, and I felt the pang in my breast of a man struck. It was sometimes so distressing, so instant, that I lay in the heather on the top of the island, with my face hid, kicking my heels for agony. And now, when I can hear the actual concussions of the air and hills, when I *know* personally the people who stand exposed to it, I am able to go on *tant bien que mal* with a letter to James Payn! The blessings of age, though mighty small, are tangible. I have heard a great deal of them since I came into the world, and now that I begin to taste of them—Well! But this is one, that people do get cured of the excess of sensibility; and I had as lief these people were shot at as my-

self—or almost, for then I should have some of the fun, such as it is.

You are to conceive me, then, sitting in my little gallery room, shaken by these continual spasms of cannon, and with my eye more or less singly fixed on the imaginary figure of my dear James Payn. I try to see him in bed; no go. I see him instead jumping up in his room in Waterloo Place (where *ex hypothesi* he is not), sitting on the table, drawing out a very black briar-root pipe, and beginning to talk to a slim and ill-dressed visitor in a voice that is good to hear and with a smile that is pleasant to see. (After a little more than half an hour, the voice that was ill to hear has ceased, the cannonade is over.) And I am thinking how I can get an answering smile wafted over so many leagues of land and water, and can find no way.

I have always been a great visitor of the sick; and one of the sick I visited was W. E. Henley, which did not make very tedious visits, so I'll not get off much purgatory for them. That was in the Edinburgh Infirmary, the old one, the true one, with Georgius Secundus standing and pointing his toe in a niche of the façade; and a mighty fine building it was! And I remember one winter's afternoon, in that place of misery, that Henley and I chanced to fall in talk about James Payn himself. I am wishing that you could have heard that talk! I think that would make you smile. We had mixed you up with John Payne, for one thing, and stood amazed at your extraordinary, even painful, versatility; and for another, we found ourselves each students so well prepared for examinations on the novels of the real Mackay. Perhaps, after all, this is worth something in life—to have given so much pleasure to a pair so different in every way as were Henley and I, and to be talked of with so much interest by two such (beg pardon) clever lads!

The cheerful Lang has neglected to tell me what is the matter with you; so, I'm sorry to say, I am cut off from all the customary consolations. I can't say, "Think how much worse it would be if you had a broken leg!" when you may have the crushing repartee up your sleeve, "But it is my leg that is broken." This is a pity. But there are consolations. You are an Englishman (I believe);

you are a man of letters; you have never been made C.B.; your hair was not red; you have played cribbage and whist; you did not play either the fiddle or the banjo; you were never an æsthete; you never contributed to —— *Journal;* your name is not Jabez Balfour; you are totally unconnected with the Army and Navy departments; I understand you to have lived within your income—why, cheer up! here are many legitimate causes of congratulation. I seem to be writing an obituary notice. *Absit omen!* But I feel very sure that these considerations will have done you more good than medicine.

By the by, did you ever play piquet? I have fallen a victim to this debilitating game. It is supposed to be scientific; God save the mark, what self-deceivers men are! It is distinctly less so than cribbage. But how fascinating! There is such material opulence about it, such vast ambitions may be realised—and are not; it may be called the Monte Cristo of games. And the thrill with which you take five cards partakes of the nature of lust—and you draw four sevens and a nine, and the seven and nine of a suit that you discarded, and O! but the world is a desert! You may see traces of discouragement in my letter: all due to piquet! There has been a disastrous turn of the luck against me; a month or two ago I was two thousand ahead; now, and for a week back, I have been anything from four thousand eight hundred to five thousand two hundred astern. If I have a sixième, my beast of a partner has a septième; and if I have three aces, three kings, three queens, and three knaves (excuse the slight exaggeration), the devil holds quatorze of tens! —I remain, my dear James Payn, your sincere and obliged friend—old friend let me say,

Robert Louis Stevenson.

[Æt. 43]

To George Meredith

["gower woodsere"]

Vailima, Samoa, April 17th, 1894.

My dear Meredith,—

Many good things have the gods sent to me of late. First of all there was a letter from you by the kind hand

of Mariette, if she is not too great a lady to be remembered in such a style; and then there came one Lysaght with a charming note of introduction in the well-known hand itself. We had but a few days of him, and liked him well. There was a sort of geniality and inward fire about him at which I warmed my hands. It is long since I have seen a young man who has left in me such a favourable impression; and I find myself telling myself, "O, I must tell this to Lysaght," or, "This will interest him," in a manner very unusual after so brief an acquaintance. The whole of my family shared in this favourable impression, and my halls have re-echoed ever since, I am sure he will be amused to know, with *Widdicombe Fair*.

He will have told you doubtless more of my news than I could tell you myself; he has your European perspective, a thing long lost to me. I heard with a great deal of interest the news of Box Hill. And so I understand it is to be enclosed! Allow me to remark, that seems a far more barbaric trait of manners than the most barbarous of ours. We content ourselves with cutting off an occasional head.

I hear we may soon expect the *Amazing Marriage*. You know how long, and with how much curiosity, I have looked forward to the book. Now, in so far as you have adhered to your intention, Gower Woodsere will be a family portrait, age twenty-five, of the highly respectable and slightly influential and fairly aged *Tusitala*. You have not known that gentleman; console yourself, he is not worth knowing. At the same time, my dear Meredith, he is very sincerely yours—for what he is worth, for the memories of old times, and in the expectation of many pleasures still to come. I suppose we shall never see each other again; flitting youths of the Lysaght species may occasionally cover these unconscionable leagues and bear greetings to and fro. But we ourselves must be content to converse on an occasional sheet of notepaper, and I shall never see whether you have grown older, and you shall never deplore that Gower Woodsere should have declined into the pantaloon *Tusitala*. It is perhaps better so. Let us continue to see each other as we were, and accept, my dear Meredith, my love and respect.

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

[Æt. 44]

To Edmund Gosse *

["I was not born for age"]

Vailima, Samoa, December 1, 1894.

I am afraid, my dear Weg, that this must be the result of bribery and corruption! The volume to which the dedication stands as preface seems to me to stand alone in your work; it is so natural, so personal, so sincere, so articulate in substance, and what you always were sure of—so rich in adornment.

Let me speak first of the dedication. I thank you for it from my heart. It is beautifully said, beautifully and kindly felt; and I should be a churl indeed if I were not grateful, and an ass if I were not proud. I remember when Symonds dedicated a book to me; I wrote and told him of "the pang of gratified vanity" with which I had read it. The pang was present again, but how much more sober and autumnal—like your volume. Let me tell you a story, or remind you of a story. In the year of grace something or other, anything between '76 and '78, I mentioned to you in my usual autobiographical and inconsiderate manner that I was hard up. You said promptly that you had a balance at your banker's, and could make it convenient to let me have a cheque, and I accepted and got the money—how much was it?—twenty, or perhaps thirty pounds? I know not—but it was a great convenience. The same evening, or the next day, I fell in conversation (in my usual autobiographical and . . . see above) with a denizen of the Savile Club, name now gone from me, only his figure and a dim three-quarter view of his face remaining. To him I mentioned that you had given me a loan, remarking easily that of course it didn't matter to you. Whereupon he read me a lecture, and told me how it really stood with you financially. He was pretty serious, fearing, as I could not help perceiving, that I should take too light a view of the responsibility and the service (I was always thought too light—the irresponsible jester—you remember. O, *quantum mutatus ab illo!*) If I remember rightly, the money was repaid be-

* Stevenson died two days after the date of this letter.

fore the end of the week—or, to be more exact and a trifle pedantic, the sennight—but the service has never been forgotten; and I send you back this piece of ancient history, *consule Planco,* as a salute for your dedication, and propose that we should drink the health of the nameless one who opened my eyes as to the true nature of what you did for me on that occasion.

But here comes my Amanuensis, so we'll get on more swimmingly now. You will understand perhaps that what so particularly pleased me in the new volume, what seems to me to have so personal and original a note, are the middle-aged pieces in the beginning. The whole of them, I may say, though I must own an especial liking to—

> I yearn not for the fighting fate,
> That holds and hath achieved;
> I live to watch and meditate
> And dream—and be deceived.

You take the change gallantly. Not I, I must confess. It is all very well to talk of renunciation, and of course it has to be done. But, for my part, give me a roaring toothache! I do like to be deceived and to dream, but I have very little use for either watching or meditation. I was not born for age. And, curiously enough, I seem to see a contrary drift in my work from that which is so remarkable in yours. You are going on sedately travelling through your ages, decently changing with the years to the proper tune. And here am I, quite out of my true course, and with nothing in my foolish elderly head but love-stories. This must repose upon some curious distinction of temperaments. I gather from a phrase, boldly autobiographical, that you are—well, not precisely growing thin. Can that be the difference?

It is rather funny that this matter should come up just now, as I am at present engaged in treating a severe case of middle age in one of my stories—*The Justice-Clerk.* The case is that of a woman, and I think that I am doing her justice. You will be interested, I believe, to see the difference in our treatments. *Secreta Vitæ* comes nearer to the case of my poor Kirstie. Come to think of it, Gosse, I believe the main distinction is that

you have a family growing up around you, and I am a childless, rather bitter, very clear-eyed, blighted youth. I have, in fact, lost the path that makes it easy and natural for you to descend the hill. I am going at it straight. And where I have to go down it is a precipice.

I must not forget to give you a word of thanks for *An English Village*. It reminds me strongly of Keats, which is enough to say; and I was particularly pleased with the petulant sincerity of the concluding sentiment.

Well, my dear Gosse, here's wishing you all health and prosperity, as well as to the mistress and the bairns. May you live long, since it seems as if you would continue to enjoy life. May you write many more books as good as this one—only there's one thing impossible, you can never write another dedication that can give the same pleasure to the vanished

TUSITALA.

APPENDIX

Benjamin Clough to Asa Clough

[murder at sea]

On Board Ship *Sharon*, of Fairhaven.

At Sea, Thursday, Feb. 9, 1843.

A favorable chance having presented itself, I embrace it to write you a few lines. After my last at Brava, we shaped our course for St. Paul's Island where we arrived making a quick passage. We stopped here a few hours and I went ashore in the boat. We pulled into a small basin on the east side of the island, which is supposed to have been the crater of a burning mountain, having boiling springs on the beach where you can catch a fish and heave him over your head into the spring, where he will be cooked and salted in a few minutes, the water being salt. We saw a few hogs, but too far distant to be got at with ease. There is nothing grows on the island but Scurvy-grass. We saw the grave of the mate of the *Aeronaut* of New London (Mystic), who was killed near this island by a whale in 1837. We caught a few fish and went on board, pulling past a great number of Wright Whales. We then shaped our course for Copang, where we arrived Oct. 26, dropped anchor and lay three days, but finding nothing to be got but water. A few Dutch here, and a thing by the name of Fort, but not much more. Some Chinese and the rest Malays. The Chinese have a Temple here and the Malays a Mosque, which are of not much account. After we left here, we passed through the Straits of Timor Bunda Sea, Pitt's Passage, Lokisang Channel, and Gillot's Passage into the Pacific Ocean, seeing Sperm Whales once in the Straits, but got none, three of our boat steerers having missed. We then started for Pleasant Island on the Equator in Long. 167, 20 E., the place of our destination. I would here observe that Capt. Norris has been frequently beating the steward, Geo. Babcock, a mullato belonging at

Newport, R. I., in the most barbarous manner. On the 12th Dec. 1841 I heard the Steward say, "O Sir, you will kill me," and the mate went down and the Capt. came on deck and ordered him put in the rigging whare he gave him 2 dozen with the double part of 18 yarn, cut him down, and ordered him to go to his duty again. About 7 p.m. the bell rang for the steward but he not coming the mate went forward and sung out for him, when one of the men sung out that he was not coming until he was used better. He was then brought out by force and 8 of the crew put in irons. 2 of them were then seized up and given 2 dozen a piece and the rest, promising to do better, were all sent to their duty again.

We then went back on our cruising ground and cruised the season, having very bad luck, the Captain beating the Steward as usual. We then started for Rotumah and April 7th let go Anchor. We lay here and took in wood and water and 9 of our men left. We shipped 2 White men, 4 Kanakas, 2 Rotumah men, 1 Ocean and 1 Hope Islander, the last two being left here by other ships. We then started for our ground again and at Hope Island got more Natives.

This season the Devil appears to have entered our Captain with double force. About the middle of June the Steward he burnt his foot to blister all over. I would add that after we left Rotumah he was turned out of the cabin and put in cook, he not being allowed to leave the ship. At the time he scalt his foot, he was reduced to almost a Skeleton. Sometimes his eyes swelled so that he could not see, and the blood and corruption running from all parts of his body, the skin hanging in great flakes on his foot. Some times he would make him mix Meal in a Kid and set it on deck and eat raw meal with the Hogs. The 4th of July he gave him 7 dozen on the back, one on the head and one on the feet, he being made what is called Spread Eagle, that is, he being tied by the rists so that his feet could not touch and his legs seized out taut each way. The rope used was hemp whale line. From the first of July to the first of September he beat him almost every day, using any weapon that came to hand and making him rub the plank when there was any bunches in them until his Knees were worn nearly to

the bone and his foot a mass of corruption. He then undertook to cure them but whenever he dressed them he would stamp on them and kick him in the face until the blood would stream from his mouth and nose and then make him stuff up his nose with Oakum.

On the 1 of September he came on deck in the morning, sung out for the Steward as usual, which was, where are you, you damned Nigger you, and set him to oiling a couple of brass guns that stood aft, when the Capt. was informed that he had some Meat the night before, which he had not. He then got his rope and gave him a terrible flogging acrost the back as he was bending over oiling the guns. At 7.30 we got breakfast. After breakfast he got some salve to put on his wounds, and gave a great many kicks as usual in the temples. He told him to go draw a tub of water in the waist. He got up to go and stumbled a number of times from the Mizzen mast to the waist. It was with great difficulty that he could draw a bucket of water, which the captain seeing, came with a rope and kept flogging him over the back. After he got the water drawn he told him to get some sand and go to scouring, which he started to do and stumbled from Starboard to Larboard side, where he fell. The Capt. began to beat him with the rope to make him get up. He tried a number of times by getting hold of things and kept stumbling until he came to the cheptree where *he fell to rise no more,* Capt. Norris beating him all the time and he saying *Oh Capt.—I am dying.* He was sewed up in a blanket with his bloody clothes on and at sunset hove overboard.

The Captain has often said he would kill him in defiance of everything, and when he was beating him he say he expected to go to Hell for him and the day he killed him he told him he need not be afraid of going to Hell as they would kick him out of that. So ends as cold-blooded a murder as was ever recorded, being about eight months taking his life.

One of our men that we shipped at Rotumah when we were at Pleasant Island got into a canoe to desert when he was discovered and ordered on deck. When he got there the Captain catched him by the collar and the man catched hold of his shirt, the man being drunk, when

the Captain sung out for help and he was tied hand and foot with spun yarn. He then choked him and kicked him in the face, and the man said if he ever got loose he would take his life. The Captain ordered him to be put into a canoe but we afterwards learned that he never reached the shore. This was before the Steward was killed.

Our Captain was also in the habit of pounding the Kanakas also. After the season was out we went to Ascension in Lat. 6.20 North, Long. 158.30 E. Whilst we lay there recruiting the Captain kept drunk. 12 men left us here, saying they would not sail with a Murderer.

Oct. 27, 1842, we left Ascension for New Zealand to get men, the Captain keeping drunk nearly all the time and beating the Kanakas, we having 6 of them on board and but 11 of the rest of us. Nov. 5 we raised sperm whales and lowered two boats, leaving the Captain, steward and 3 natives on board, the Captain about half drunk. We struck a whale and killed him and continued chasing the School when we saw the colors at the main-top-gallant head set at half mast. We then pulled for the ship, when the man who was at Mast head said that the natives had killed the Captain and got possession of the ship, haveing the Cutting Spades, Harpoons, Lances, Wood, Bone belaying Pins, Hammers, etc., to keep the boats off. We then told the Steward to cut the halliards and let the Sails run down to stop the Ship's headway. We then pulled up to the Ship. They threw an axe into the Boat, wood, etc., so that we could not come near the ship without the loss of lives, the Natives keeping watch of each Boat with long spades in their hands and one at the wheel, the Sun being about 3 minutes high. Soon as it begun to grow dark we pulled out ahead of the Ship and I took a Boat knife in my mouth to keep off the Sharks, there being plenty around. I got overboard and silently swam for the Ship, just keeping my head above water enough to breathe. I got hold of the Eye bolt in the rudder, got up onto it, and then into the Cabin window. As I came alongside one of the Natives was standing between the Night heads pounding on a tin pan. As soon as I got into the Cabin window I took off my clothes, they being wet, and to be in a better condition for fight-

ing. I then got 2 cutlasses and carried them into the Forward Cabin and set them up at the Stairs. I then got some powder and balls and Muskets and commenced loading them. I could hear the natives walking about decks, getting Weapons together to keep off the boats. I had got 2 of the Muskets loaded and the Powder into the third one, and stepped into the After Cabin to get Balls when I heard someone coming down. I stepped to the door when I saw one of the Natives had just got to the bottom of the stairs, knocking the Muskets down that I set up there. Being no light in the Cabin, he could not see me so well as I could him. I stepped out and got a Cutlass, made a thrust at him, but it being dark I did not hurt him very bad. He gave a shout, catched hold of me and I hold of him. I stepped back into the After Cabin, he following, both of us having hold of the Cutlass. I then threw him onto the Cabin floor, when he began to sing out for the other Natives and I to work at him with my fist and the edge of the Cutlass which sawed acrost the back of his neck. I then jumped up and started for the Stairs, but he jumped up and slashed manfully for a minute or two, but it being dark he could not see me nor I him, but he hit me 8 or 10 times. I then stepped to the foot of the Stairs in forward Cabin and looked up and saw one of the Natives with a long spade about half way down the Stairs ready to cut if he could see anybody. I then took up a Musket and shot him through the heart, the Spade coming down at the same time and cutting me on the thick part of my Arm above the elbow, cutting to the bone. I heard the Native in the After Cabin breathe heavily and heard from him no more. I steped back into the Cabin, the blood running from all parts of my body like a stuck dolphin, in the dark, the boats away and one Native on deck. Directly he came along with a spade in his hand, but seeing one Native dead and seeing the other he went forward before I could get a Musket. I then called the Boats on board and a light was struck, and the Native laying on the Transom in the After Cabin when the Mate took a Musket and put a ball through his heart. He was dragged on deck and both of them thrown overboard.

The Captain was found dead on the starboard side

abreast of the after part of the Main rigging, his head nearly severed from his body and mangled by the Hogs, pieces of scull laying on deck. I then had my wounds dressed, being about 15 in number, my body being all over blood, both Cabin floors being covered with blood and the Starboard side of the deck. The next morning the Captain was buried with the usual ceremonies and the other Native found stowed away between decks and put in Irons and the Ship headed for Sidney. There we arrived 22nd of Dec., 1842. We delivered our Native up to the American Consul. We left the 6th of Jan., the Mate Thomas H. Smith, taking command and I am second mate. My wounds got healed up about the time we went into Sidney. We have now about 500 Blls of Sperm Oil on board.

But how long we shall be out is more than I can say. I have enjoyed very good health since we left Sidney except my Right hand which is so that I can hardly hold a pen.

We have got a good crew on board and I am in hopes that we shall do something as we are on good ground. I have not time to write more as I am holding paper in my hand. Give my respects to all Enquiring friends, etc.

B. Clough.

J. Natahu to the Colorado Tax Commission *

[japanese english]

"Hon tex comision and Hon comision bord and kartrite: Gents: This respectfy say that mi go devil motorcickle is maid too much in taxe ritin receev from you. Trade fur it 5 years long with 2 hog. they ded, it now ded. run thrue stcky fence in ditch. no koff, no go. You bon hed kum take him. no pay so dam much as Hon comision say in ritin on ded go devil. You kum tak em hole ranch.

J. Natahu."

* Mr. Cartwright, tax assessor of Otero County, had been instructed by the Colorado Tax Commission to increase the valuation of all motorcycles.

G. MATSUKO * TO THE SAN FRANCISCO "CHRONICLE"

["PRO-NOTHINGS"]

I wish you will preach to throw all of the near-Americans and pro-nothings in the Bay; do no longer handle the half-breed with kid words. . . . Ever since I arrive in this land of free I am learning more to regret that I am not born here, so I can sign name Smith or likewise. I wish to be best American money can buy. It makes me blushful now to think I do no more than refrain from best food. I have admiration for them which wears button saying, 'I owe for Liberty Bond,' and I make loud cheer for him. This is the lifetime to raise hell for Germans, and I beg you assisting.

G. MATSUKO.

SERGEANT C. B. CURTIS TO HIS MOTHER

[A RHYMING LETTER]

WITH THE AMERICAN EXPEDITIONARY FORCES,
"SOMEWHERE IN FRANCE,"
April 13, 1918.

Dear Ma:

Just a line to let you know that the boys are on the go and the war is still in progress over here. We'll soon get that sour quince—Kaiser William's young Crown Prince and we'll hang him 'side of William by the ear. All the boys are well and fine and the grub is right in line. We should worry what the Huns may have to say. We will soon be sailing back with a whiz, a whang and whack, to our home—the good old U. S. A.

We lie in our bunks at night by the glowing candle's light and hear the cannon's rumble long and low. Are we in it? Well I guess: Shall we stay? Our answer—"Yes!" We shall stay till every Hun has gone below! Out of all this din and fuss Yankee land looks good to us; but we're glad to stay to help our Allies win. With our cannon at our back, we will run to the attack and we'll drive the Germans homeward with a vim.

* Mr. Wallace Irwin assures the editor that H. Togo had nothing to do with the letter signed G. Matsuko.

This is sure a fine old land—grass and trees on every hand and the grass is green as grass can ever be. All the flowers in the dell, violets and yellow bell, as you hike along, each one you'll surely see. Tho the grass is green beneath and the vines all twine their wreath, let me tell you what above us may be seen. High among the snowy clouds with their purring smooth and loud, flies the ever dreaded human bird-machine. Round and round they circle high till it seems they pierce the sky, then with curves and loop-the-loops they drop. Will the wonders of this age written on old history's page, never lessen, never weaken, never stop?

At my desk so rough and crude—made of boards my own hands hewed—day by day I sit and labor as of old. It seems so much like home that it seems that I must roam—then I stir and find my dreams grow old. Never mind, my honey girl, if the things are in a whirl—I'll be with you when the yuletide comes around. There'll be a hot time in the State with the Fifty-fourth for bait and we'll raise the blooming roof right off the town.

Well, 'tis time to go to bed with the moon-light overhead and the lights will soon be out I greatly fear. I would write you often, pet, but the mail that you would get would be all bunched up, as mail goes slowly here. Just remember I am well and we'll give the Germans H——, then we'll march back o'er the fields of heather; for a fellow can't feel bad—only just a little sad—for this sure is what you'd call real weather.

Haven't heard yet from the States but of course it's not too late and the ships are surely needed for the food. Give my love to all the girls with their fair and golden curls—but keep the most for you—I knew you would. Tell my Pa he mustn't fret, I'll be working with him yet. Now the light is burning low, so I must quit. Love to all—it's getting late. Gee, this life is surely great. So long. Mumsy,—rest tomorrow—there I fit. Pray for all the boys at war—pray for what we're fighting for—for prayers are what will win this war, I'll bet. Wish that you were here to see all this peachy scenery.

I remain, as ever, just your loving

CHET.

P. S.—Gee, this is sure a day of days, in many, many, many ways, for lo I got three letters from the States. One was numbered No. 4. Gee, I wish there had been more, for my mother wrote the letter, sure as fates. You should ought to heard me holler when I saw a Yankee dollar lying safely there between the folds. And before I'm leaving here I shall buy a souvenir, for Yankee money here is good as gold. I accept with many thanks and shall change it into francs when I strike the first Y. M. C. A. If I do not close this note it will never reach the boat, and you'll sure "be out of luck," as we all say. Love again.

C. B. C.

French Soldiers to a Benefactress *

["your brothers are fighting at our side"]

[1917]

"Madame la Presidente:

The cases that you have been good enough to send us have arrived in Valence. Thank you with all our hearts. We are very proud to wear the superb pajamas that we owe to your generosity. For a long time we have not been so elegant. We are almost as chic as Americans! Since the beginning of the war, you have busied yourself in making life less hard and now that your brothers are fighting at our side and dying for our beautiful France, you, working indefatigably—you clothe us with warm and pretty clothes. We would like to thank you in some better way, but we are, Madame, only poor, grateful wounded, who like you very much. Please be our interpreter to the women of your country. And be assured of our profound respects and our deep gratitude."

* This letter, written in English, is signed by thirteen wounded men in a hospital in Valence.

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